

Cabinet

Tuesday 11 February 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Kate Taylor, Acting Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Laing and Councillor Smith

The meeting started at 2pm and finished at 3.51pm.

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.

23. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

24. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

25. **Questions from the Public**

There were four questions from members of the public.

The following question was asked by Ms Holman:

Under the current state of Climate Emergency declared ten months ago, what progress has been made in effecting the public's involvement in determining the actions for this coming year most to be prioritised in the face of our unfolding climate catastrophe and will this public involvement be in the form of a binding Citizen's Assembly?

Councillor Dann, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene gave the following response:

In September 2019 after the Climate Emergency declaration we commenced a public consultation exercise to gain people's views on climate change. 1100 responses were received and of those 92% of respondents said that were concerned about climate change and 75% did not feel well informed about climate change. We also know that over 60% of interventions to tackle climate change need some form of behaviour change. We are therefore very clear that we will all need to work together to solve this.

In the Climate Emergency Action Plan we have included a whole section on engagement. The first action listed in this section is to 'organise a programme of 'climate conversations' and another is to 'organise community and school events to harness grassroots enthusiasm to take action to tackle climate change'. Now we have the CEAP adopted we will be looking to progress this actions so the second CEAP can be further influenced by others all across Plymouth.

With regards Citizens assembly's, we are engaging with Devon as they have already started a citizens assembly process so we can see the outcomes that come out of that process. We will keep under review whether we should conduct something similar in Plymouth once the Devon process has completed.

Mr Hill asked the following question:

When comparable sized cities such as Newcastle and Sunderland can declare their elections results before midnight why did it take until gone 5am in Plymouth and what steps does Plymouth intend to take to learn and implement the procedures these other cities employ to enable speedier declarations in future?

Tracey Lee, Chief Executive, gave the following response:

I would like to thank Mr Hill for his question about the 2019 General Election Count in Plymouth, and apologise that it was not dealt with in January in line with our procedures. Although the question relates to a function of the Acting Returning Officer rather than a function of the Cabinet, I am happy to answer it here.

While everyone is keen for the results of elections to be declared as soon as is practicable on the night of the count, I have a responsibility as Acting Returning Officer to ensure that the process of the count is accurate, transparent and robust.

Four out of the 650 declarations in the 2019 General Election were made by midnight on 12 December, including Newcastle and Sunderland. A third (220) of all declarations were made between 4 and 6am on 13 December, including Plymouth's three constituencies and many of our comparator cities.

After every election, we review our performance and processes, and obtain feedback from everyone taking part, including candidates and agents as well as all of our staff so that we can make improvements. We have also liaised with a number of election staff and managers in other areas to learn from their practice. As a result, we have identified several improvements that we are intending to make to improve the flow of the process, including changes to the training we provide to counting staff and count supervisors.

The elections in May 2020 will include the Police and Crime Commissioner election as well as the City Council local election. This will mean that there will be up to twice as many ballot papers to verify on the night as there would be for a single election. We will however be doing our best to apply what we have learned from previous Counts to ensure a timely and accurate result.

Mr Ramage asked the following question:

Would the Cabinet consult with ward councillors as to whether they are prepared to consider using their periodical ward meetings to engage with individuals, groups and organisations within each community on how the council can support and encourage useful and creative ways to reduce carbon emissions within each community? A member of the Low Carbon Team could also be present.

Councillor Dann, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene gave the following response:

Clearly we cannot direct Ward councillors as to how they should engage with their communities over the climate emergency or any other issue. We are aware however that some Councillors would be interested in setting up meetings and working with individuals and groups in their wards. To support this we will therefore be producing materials that ward councillors can use to run events within their communities that would form part of the climate conversations that will be happening.

Mr Francis asked the following question:

How grass-roots community self-build groups can be supported to build small plots of houses on Homes England and/or Council owned land?

Councillor Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative development gave the following response:

The council has no influence over what Homes England choose to do with their land so cannot comment on how they might provide support.

You will be aware from your discussions both with me and with council Officers that we are very supportive of self build. We have met our duty in the first three years of the Right to Build by granting sufficient planning consents to exceed the demand evidenced by the Register and continue to look for ways to provide more opportunities.

The council is currently supporting several community groups such as Pembroke Estate Management Board, Millfields Trust and PEC to help them deliver community led housing schemes. Since the launch of Plan for Homes in 2013 we have released over 100 acres of council owned land, any of which could have been used for community led schemes had any groups approached us with a proposal. We have recently released more council land which again could be developed by community groups.

Our Housing Delivery Team provide support for community groups wanting to develop housing on both Council owned and other land and any proposals should be directed to them in the first instance. Also we are hopeful that the Government's Community Housing Fund will be extended and can be used to pay for additional capacity to support groups who wish to bring forward community led schemes.

26. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The Leader, Councillor Evans OBE, had the following urgent business:

The future of local government finance is at a crucial stage and the changes that are due will have a fundamental impact upon Plymouth, the resources it receives and the impact upon local services.

The government has now said it will introduce Fair Funding from April 2021. There will be a number of papers that will be released over the coming months that will provide an indication as to the impact of their review. The first major concern is the timing of these papers and how much time we will have to assess the impact and more importantly set our budget and prepare a Medium Term Financial Plan.

Data released by the Government on the impact of proposed changes to the formula to distribute funding for Adult Social Care indicated a devastating impact upon Plymouth, with an estimated loss in excess of £7m. This is just for the Adult Social Care element of the funding formula.

In essence the Government's proposed changes to local authority funding will dramatically downgrade the importance of deprivation in deciding the distribution of funding to local authorities and will have a devastating effect on local adult social care funding. It is likely that further proposed changes will cause even greater reductions in for children's social care but no details has been released for this as of yet. Plymouth has suffered the impact of 10 years of austerity and cuts to our funding at a time of rising demand, particularly for adult social care and children's services.

The Leader concluded that there is little confidence in the government and future proposals for local government. This will be compounded by the impact and uncertainty created by Fair Funding Proposals.

27. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader, Councillor Evans OBE made the following announcements:

- The Box Opening date is confirmed for 16 May with a VIP reception on 14 May. A public ballot will give 6000 residents the opportunity to visit over the weekend of 02 and 03 May.
- The Anthony Gormley statue – Look II which will be installed on the West Pier
- The launch of a £2 coin recognising the importance of the Mayflower 400 anniversary
- The New York Times – lists Plymouth as the 43rd place globally to visit in 2020, specifically mentioning Mayflower 400 and the Box
- CNN named Plymouth as the second top destination to visit in the world in 2020
- The Box was the second recommendation by Will Gompertz (BBC Arts Editor) as his second “must see” arts in 2020
- The Box has also been identified as one of the top 20 museums opening globally in 2020 in a variety of international trade publications.
- Tom Jones is coming to town on Friday June 19 hosted by LHG events in partnership with PCC
- The Lonely Rock yacht race which will run on alternate years to the Fastnet race starting on 16 August 2020.
- First Board meeting of the National Marine Park has taken place
- Planning is underway for the Mayflower trail which will consist of a series of 2m brass totems. Installation will commence immediately after planning and in time for the summer
- Work is progressing well on the Elizabethan House

- Progress continues towards completion of all legal arrangements relating to Brunel Plaza and the hope is to sign them by 14 February 2020
- Oceansgate phase 2 – The frame is now up and we are hoping for completion in September. We are now 85% let including hosting the institute of technology. Phase 1 is fully let and we are working very hard now to unlock phase 3
- The main construction has now started on the Forder Valley Link Road with completion scheduled for summer 2022

28. **Monthly Activity Round Up**

Councillor Dann, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene made the following announcements:

- We have been awarded £450k as part of the Urban Tree Challenge funding from the Forestry Commission to plant trees. Over 2800 new tree will be planted, over a thousand of which will be large trees.

Councillor Jon Taylor, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills made the following announcement:

- Plymouth has been praised for its progress on improving education by the regional Director of Ofsted in his annual report, acknowledging the hard work and efforts being made to bring about improvements;
- The Medifest event at the Guildhall on 30 Jan was a huge success and was well attended over two days, with 950 attendees. Congratulations were offered to the students that organised this great event.

Councillor Evans introduced an audio clip on behalf of Councillor Laing, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on Care Journeys.

29. **Reports From Scrutiny**

This item was considered under the Budget Scrutiny Recommendations.

30. **Pledge Update**

Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the pledge update.

Following a discussion, Cabinet agreed:

- To note the completion of pledge 84 in January 2020, bringing the total for completed pledges to 63.

31. **Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 (to follow)**

Councillor Lowry introduced the Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21.

Following a discussion, Cabinet agreed to:

I. Recommend the 2020/21 Budget to Council (as shown in appendix 2) to ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan;

2. Recommend the Capital Budget of £892.911m to Council to continue the investment within the City and Growth agenda.

32. **Capital and Revenue Monitoring Report Q3 (to follow)**

Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the Capital and Revenue Monitoring Report Q3.

Following a discussion Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the current revenue monitoring position and action plans in place to reduce/mitigate shortfalls;
2. To note there are no virements that need approval since 1st October 2019;
3. Council approve the Capital Budget 2019-2024 is revised to £892.911 (as shown in Table 5)

33. **Transfer of PCC Procurement Services**

Cabinet deferred consideration of this item to a later meeting.

34. **School Attendance Consultation and Revised Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices**

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation introduced the report on School Attendance Consultation and Revised Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices.

Following a discussion, Cabinet agreed that Councillor Taylor be authorised to take a decision on the 10th of March.

This code of conduct policy has been reviewed to ensure that schools are supported to improve attendance at school. This consultation has clarified the policy and delivers pledge 42 of the Labour manifesto, this balances the views of schools and parents given in the consultation.

The option proposed in the paper changes the threshold for unauthorised absence from 8 to 11 sessions for unauthorised holiday absence only. There is a balance in trying to work in partnership to support regular attendance at school but acknowledging there may be times families need to take holidays outside of regular school holidays. Feedback for example included that from wives of military personnel whose husbands are often not home during school holidays. This change would therefore better support our armed forces community.

Budget Scrutiny Recommendations

Councillor Mrs Aspinall introduced the report from Budget Scrutiny.

Following a discussion, Cabinet agreed:

- To consider and respond to the fifteen recommendations made by Budget Scrutiny Select Committee. The response was as follows:

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Cabinet Response
1.	That Cabinet continue to make all efforts to build the working balances back up to 5% within two financial years to ensure	Agree: Achieving and maintaining working balances to mitigate financial risk to the Council remains a priority for the

	<p>an effective financial buffer for the organisation and therefore reduce financial risk.</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny also recommends that Audit and Governance Committee look at the methodology behind the setting of the 5% target and whether financial modelling of future risks and past performance could be used to recommend a more appropriate level in the future.</p>	<p>Council. However, this is conditional on Plymouth not suffering further and damaging reductions in funding as a result of the government's Fairer Funding review. The Audit and Governance Committee will be asked to review the methodology for setting an appropriate level of balances.</p>
2.	<p>That Cabinet reconsider the approach to legacy savings, particularly with regard the vacancy saving factor of 5%, and determine an alternate approach to addressing the challenge of meeting those savings in a more effective way.</p>	<p>Agree: Measures will be considered for implementation to address the requirement to maintain a vacancy saving target of 5%, and directorates will report on further measures to address other 'legacy' savings targets</p>
3.	<p>That the referendum threshold for setting Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept is not breached.</p>	<p>Agree: Subject to the Council's ability to set a balanced budget in line with statutory requirements</p>
4.	<p>That Cabinet seek ways to increase the Community Grant for each Councillor as per the December 2019 Motion on Notice and clarify the allocation within the 2020/21 budget. This should include a review of the Community Grants guidance and criteria by a small cross-party group to ensure the best value and greatest impact is achieved from the grants.</p>	<p>Agree: The Cabinet Member will consider this request in line with the December 2019 Council Motion on Notice, and commission a review of the Community Grants guidance and criteria.</p>
5.	<p>Cabinet ensures that the Medium Term Financial Plan is made available to Finance and Performance Scrutiny as soon as available, following clarification from Government on funding allocation, including fairer funding.</p>	<p>Agree: As soon as Government provides clarity about medium term funding allocations for local government, the implications for Plymouth will be analysed and shared.</p>
6.	<p>That Cabinet explore all avenues to promote caring careers within the city to support Adult Social Care (ASC), including mental health services, in order to support the workforce. This is with the intent of positively impacting both ASC service users and the ASC budget; acknowledging that both are interlinked.</p>	<p>Agree: A cross Council focus on promoting caring careers is prioritised, and prevention and early intervention remain a priority for the People Directorate, at the same time as balancing resources to meet acute demand.</p>

	That Cabinet consider identifying and focussing the budget on key preventative and/or early intervention activities, such as community youth, sports development and mental health services.	
7.	That Cabinet consider identifying and focussing the budget on key preventative and/or early intervention activities, such as community youth, sports development and mental health services.	As above
8.	That Cabinet identify which lessons learned from Adult Social Care, in terms of introducing new ways of working, could be transferred to Children's Social Care, recognising that key aspects of success included a long-term view, whole Council approach with cross-party support.	Agree: The current change programme in Children's Services is drawing on all the lessons learned from Adult Social Care, and is receiving support from across the Council's leadership, both from officers and politicians.
9.	That Cabinet enhance the approach to improving educational attainment by continuing to collaborate and engage with other local authorities with similar demographics to learn from and implement best practice.	Agree: visits to and collaboration with other, high performing councils are underway.
10.	That the Cabinet Member seek clarity from Government on the funding for Troubled Families programme beyond 2021 in order to provide assurance of the sustainability of the service and update Full Council as and when required.	Agree: The Cabinet will continue to press the Government for clarity about medium term funding for this important work, and will keep the Council updated
11.	That Cabinet prioritise in house foster caring with a view to increasing in-house provision of foster homes through improved training, skills and support for foster carers in the city.	Agree: Foster for Plymouth remains a key priority, and will be the focus of further support activity in the coming year for existing and new foster carers
12.	That Cabinet consider how the carbon/environmental impact of the budget can be clarified and quantified in future budget reports.	Agree: Following the adoption of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan the environmental impact of all key decisions including financial decisions will be further developed, communicated and reported.
13.	That Cabinet and the whole Council	Agree: As (12) above. The Climate

	continue to communicate the tangible benefits of the impacts associated with carbon reduction/climate emergency actions, including clarification of the performance reporting framework, and the positive impacts for residents both environmentally and financially.	Emergency Action Plan makes clear commitments to taking immediate action to address carbon reduction challenges as well as assessing longer term initiatives for effectiveness. Commitments extend to facilitating a city-wide conversation and inspiring rapid local action through effective leadership to ensure a Plymouth-wide, bottom up response to this emergency.
14.	That Cabinet continue to lobby central government in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework and Department for Transport guidelines to strengthen the climate/carbon emergency focus.	Agree: The Council will continue to use its relationship with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to push government to strengthen the emphasis on carbon reduction through planning and transport guidelines, and will use the opportunity of the publication of the Planning White Paper during 2020 as a focus for this.
15.	That Cabinet commits to the setting up of a cross-party Group to review Climate/Carbon impact of proposals and progress.	Agree: The Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene is developing proposals for appropriate governance to oversee the further development and delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan

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