

Cabinet

Tuesday 5 May 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, Chair

Councillor Pete Smith, Vice Chair

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

Also present: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance), Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services), Andrew Loton (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), Jamie Sheldon (Democratic Advisor), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Advisor), Helen Rickman (Democratic Advisor) and Amelia Boulter (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.24 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.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) proposed an amendment to the minutes for 10 March 2020 (Minute 28). Amendment to reflect the update provided by Councillor Coker where he announced the launch of a new programme; Plymouth quieter neighbourhoods – Connected Communities. This program is aimed at celebrating the distinctiveness of Plymouth's communities and a place making approach to the design of Plymouth's streets.

Amended minutes were proposed as a true and accurate record by the Chair, Councillor Evans. Seconded by Councillor Sue Dann and agreed by Cabinet.

3. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

4. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business raised.

5. **Statement from the Director of Public Health**

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) provided an update and it was highlighted that in Plymouth there have been cases of COVID-19 and lives have been lost. People have been badly affected and this was an awful tragedy for everyone concerned, however, the number of cases and deaths has been relatively low in the south west with social distancing having an impact.

There have been 44 deaths attributed to COVID-19 across the city with 400 cases of people infected. The testing centre opened rapidly in Plymouth and the next key focus would be on what happens next. There would be some guidance on coming out of the lockdown on Sunday in which we should see the gradual loosening of lockdown.

The more days people spend in isolation reduces the number of cases. This was a new disease and they were learning from research locally, nationally and across the world. The focus now on increasing the testing and people with any symptoms to self-isolate. There was a burden on asking people to isolate with a direct impact of COVID-19 on mental health, accessing other NHS services and impact on the economy could not be underestimated.

Key areas of questioning –

Councillor Lowry regarding who are key workers and testing.

Councillor Evans regarding information available on the council website

The Committee noted the update from the Director of Public Health.

6. **Statement from the Chief Executive**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) provided an update on Plymouth City Council's response to COVID-19 and conveyed her condolences to those that have lost a loved one. Thanks were given to Plymouth City Council's employees that have stepped up to ensure that critical services were being delivered and maintained as well as delivering new services. It was highlighted that –

- Gold (Strategic), silver (tactical) and bronze (operational) commands had been set up and were currently in the emergency response phase covering 4 objectives:
 - preserving life and limiting harm
 - keeping services open whilst keeping staff safe
 - supporting the local economy
 - visible and proactive community leadership
- £8.4m funding had been received from central Government and a further £7.2m is anticipated to cover the costs of COVID-19.

83% of Council staff are able to work from home and a workforce Bureau has been out in place to reassign staff where extra resource is required.

New services include supporting those shielding, Good neighbour schemes, and support for Domestic Abuse.

The Committee noted the update on Plymouth City Council's response to COVID-19.

7. **Leader's Announcements**

A Video 'Plymouth in Lockdown' was played for Members.

Councillor Evans (Leader) highlighted -

- Proud of how the city had come together in this current crisis and how people had supported each other;
- People were anxious and people have lost loved ones and dealing with the isolation and financial security. The council were doing everything it could to steer through these difficult times;
- Thanks were given to the economic team. They have been undertaking weekly calls with the Chamber of Commerce and PMG and making sure business were responding and lobbying the LEP and government business departments, LGA regarding the shortfall in government support;
- £37m distributed to over 3,000 businesses. There were still some businesses entitled to money and were in the process of tracking these down. If we can help we want to help and want those businesses to survive;
- Helpline for small businesses;
- Lobbying success for fishing with £10m received;
- Call for Fish has now spread to 23 ports around the country. This started in Plymouth;
- Shop4Plymouth, a new initiative is working well;
- Recovery programme for Plymouth launch announced which is called 'Resurgum' which has four stages
 - Acute
 - Analysis
 - Recover
 - Return
- Opening date of the Box is still being reviewed.

8. **Covid-19 Cabinet Member updates**

Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader): It was reported that:

- They have implemented Government guidance for protecting staff and for staff to work at home. Measures would be put in place to support staff with mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- Sport and leisure currently all closed. Everyone Active provide a daily podcast to encourage activity at home. Plymouth has been selected by Sport England to support children and young people to improve lives through activity and sport;

- VE Day 75 events on the Hoe had been cancelled, however there were on line events to help celebrate safely at home;
- History Festival event had been cancelled, however was available to view on line;
- Other options were being looked at for Mayflower 400 celebrations;
- Discussions were taking place on the completion of the Elizabethan House project;
- Library service was available on-line with 7,000 e-book and audio books downloaded since the lockdown.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance). It was reported that:

- Currently revenue was £190m for this financial year;
- Early assessment of COVID-19 on the city finances may cost £50m and they were working on refining this figure. Central government were fully aware of this cost and government have said that we would be fully reimbursed for the fight against COVID-19;
- Deferred payment of businesses rates for 2 months which can now be paid over 10 months rather than 12 months;
- Council tax was still being paid by residents and thank you. Last year there were 12,000 missed payments and this year 14,000 missed payment. Self-employed can defer payments until July 2020.

Andrew Hardingham (Director of Finance) was called to speak by the Chair.

Reiterated the further £7.2m to be received and money received (£2.5m) for hardship relief. However continuing pressures mean further funding will be necessary to meet shortfall.

Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People). It was reported that:

- Social worker have reviewed every child and this was reviewed weekly to ensure that they were providing the right support. PPE provided for home visits;
- Continuing to provide support to care leavers;
- Lockdown impact on mental health and wellbeing and this was being discussed when contact was made with children and young people;
- Fostering and recruitment was continuing safely. Personal thanks to foster carers;
- Some children have entered care due to lockdown related issues and this has given to a rise in those in care which is being monitored;
- Responding to safeguarding issues with the police to ensure action was taken;
- There was no shame in asking for help and that we want to help families get through this.

Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care). It was reported that:

- Caring for Plymouth and alliance between Plymouth City Council, Livewell SW and community organisations have established an offer from 8 am to 8 pm to support

Operation Shield. Thanks was given to each organisation and their staff for making a huge difference;

- Plymouth has 97 care homes across the city. Twelve of the care homes currently suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19. The local authority has been in constant contact with these care homes from the start;
- Accommodation support for care home staff and infection control visits carried out. Corporate communications team providing support to care homes in terms of messaging;
- Staffing has been impacted and they were working with homes to support shortfalls with staffing;
- Livewell SW have provided IT support for residents to stay in touch with their relatives;
- Financial support for care homes to ease the pressures surrounding staffing and PPE;
- With regard to domiciliary care, they have 2,000 services users of which 725 were high risk. 5,000 visits scheduled to deliver care;
- Proud to Care recruitment drive with rapid enrolment to allow more staff back into the profession;
- Day services and outreach provision to ensure people were getting the support they need as well as balancing the needs of service users and families. They would be re-opening Colwill Lodge and Vine Lodge in a controlled way to support provision;
- Community beds were being made available following hospital discharge and private business were supporting this;
- St Luke's providing pre and post bereavement services for families, briefing for care home staff and measure put in place to support families;
- Recognised the impact on mental health and Livewell Southwest are providing additional support service which are listed on Plymouth On-line Directory;
- Personal Protective Equipment is being made available and provision for domiciliary care and supported living was satisfactory.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Licensing and Co-operative Development). It was reported that:

- Work delivered through the Alliance has provided an extra 40 self-contained bed spaces for the homeless, however some were choosing to rough sleep;
- Twice the number of people were in bed and breakfast accommodation;
- 3 times more claims for council tax support this year which would impact on council budgets and we're encouraging people to access help;
- Over 790 volunteers as part of the Good Neighbour Scheme;
- Plymouth Online Directory (POD) has been updated to include all the community schemes, there have been 58,000 visits to the site;
- Working with Food Plymouth and debt advice agencies to ensure this service sustainable;
- Disabilities facilities grant work is being undertaken to ensure people can be supported in their homes.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street scene). It was reported that:

- Highlighted the importance of parks and green spaces during lockdown;
- They prioritised the collection of green and brown bins. Garden waste and bulky waste has been stopped to redeploy staff to maintain the service and collection of green and brown bins;
- Suspended service at the recycling centres at because it caused delays at Chelson Meadow to the collection of household waste. Plymouth City Council was planning to re-open Chelson Meadow following recent Government guidance received;
- Despite the reduced number of staff across the service and increased fly tipping, with the help of residents, they have managed to keep streets clean and collected rubbish;
- 5 tonnes of litter collected on the Parkway;
- Maintenance undertaken in parks and highlighted the issues with dog fouling;
- Parks accelerator program is still underway;
- Board meeting is planned for national marine park;
- Climate change still on the agenda.

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure). It was reported that:

- No clear guidance from the Department of Transport on workers, so immediately took the decision to undertake critical work on the network only;
- Reviewed car parking charges to enable key workers to park without charge;
- Automatically renewed blue badges where necessary;
- Real time passenger signs and road signs used to communicate with the public on guidance;
- Concessionary passes have also been automatically renewed and travel times extended;
- Bus companies are experiencing an impact from reduced patronage.

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety). It was reported that:

- Bereavement Service at Efford was now available again and there have needed to be changes to the way families say goodbye to their love ones. They were ensuring that families were able to attend but have limited the number to 10. They have upgraded the webcast facility for more people to feel part of the service;
- Public Protection Service were involved in investigations with the increase in scams with fake test kits to disinfection of the home;
- Civil Protection Team were busy supporting the council with this current emergency;
- Customer services and Contact Centre were now working from home;
- Registration service has made changes to services by going virtual;
- Increase in dog fouling and this has prompted an increase in enforcement.

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation). It was reported that:

- Thank you to schools and parents. Many schools were open and supporting children on site as well as those home learning;
- 1,000 children attending school each day and 180 across early year settings. Places still available for children of key workers;
- Ensuring most vulnerable children were safe and protected and do not fall behind with their learning;
- Home visits were in place for vulnerable children;
- CaterEd have been fantastic in filling the gaps and ensuring children do not go without food;
- Written to Secretary of State regarding the various issues with the Government voucher scheme;
- When schools reopen they were planning for that return. It would be challenging to get children back learning safely.

9. **Strategic Objectives for Plymouth City Council (Covid-19)**

The Leader, Councillor Evans OBE introduced the report on Strategic Objectives for Plymouth City Council (Covid-19). Giles Perritt, Assistant Chief Executive was in support. This was an urgent decision before Cabinet given that national emergency planning best practice is to identify recovery and renewal priorities as soon as practicable during the response phase to a major incident. Given the dynamic nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, the earliest opportunity has been taken to agree and publish the recovery and renewal framework to enable responses to national and local policy changes to be appropriately guided.

Following a discussion Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the challenges and opportunities at section (3) of the accompanying report that the city has faced since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak;
2. To note the key assumptions and adopt the key principles at section (3) of the accompanying report to guide decision making;
3. Early recovery and renewal priorities and objectives at section (4) of the accompanying report;
4. The terms of reference for the Reset Board.