

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 14 July 2021

PRESENT:

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.

Councillor Penberthy (Substitute for Councillor Dr Buchan) Vice Chair.

Councillors Coker, Dann, Hendy, Jordan, Patel, Penberthy, Salmon and Wakeham.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Dr Buchan and Dr Cree.

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Maddie Bridgeman (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Caroline Cozens (Strategic Projects Manager), Councillor Mark Deacon (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Councillor Jonathan Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport), Paul Elliott (Low Carbon City Manager), Councillor Nick Kelly (Leader), Richard May (Head of Oceansgate and Marine Investment), Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Advisor), Phil Robinson (Service Director for Street Services), Andy Sharp (Head of Business Improvement) and Sophie Tucker (Senior Support and Research Assistant).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.55 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.

1. To Note the Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Bingley as Chair and Councillor Dr Buchan as Vice Chair of this Committee for the forthcoming municipal year 2021/22.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

In the absence of Councillor Dr Buchan (Vice Chair), Councillor Penberthy was appointed as Vice Chair for this particular meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillor Dann declared a personal interest in minute 8, due to her role as Lady Mayoress in 2020/21 and Councillor Jordan declared a personal interest in minute 9, as he was Chair of a Charity.

4. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 are a correct record.

5. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The Chair took this opportunity (on behalf of the Committee) to congratulate –

- (a) the Council on its award of £9.5m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Heritage Horizon Award' for the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park; Plymouth City Council had been the only local authority to be successful in winning this award twice; this demonstrated the strength and creativity in the city;
- (b) David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) who had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 'Services to Local Government'.

Councillor Dann formally endorsed Councillor Bingley's comments. She had been the former Cabinet Member that had driven the National Marine Park project which had formed part of the Labour Party's manifesto. The Council had collaborated with a large number of stakeholders in order to progress this initiative. The National Marine Park would be a fantastic legacy for the city.

In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Chair brought forward the above item for urgent consideration because of the need to advise Members for information).

6. **Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered its terms of reference.

Councillor Salmon queried the membership, in terms of the number of Councillors that were appointed to the Committee. The terms of reference stated nine but there were 10 members on this Scrutiny Committee.

The Democratic Support Officer advised that the terms of reference were incorrect (the correct number of Members was 10). The terms of reference would need to be amended at the next City Council meeting. The number of Councillors had changed following the recent local elections.

The Committee requested that the terms of reference be amended to reflect the change in the number of Councillors appointed to this Committee.

7. **Policy Update**

Sophie Tucker (Senior Support and Research Assistant) provided an update to the briefing that had been circulated with the agenda, which included –

(a) EU Settlement Scheme and Immigration -

- the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme had been 30 June 2021; new statistics showed that there was a total of six million applications for the scheme which secured EU citizens' right in the UK;
- there had been a surge in applications which included more than 400,000 in June; this had resulted in approximately 570,000 pending applications; the Government had assured those who had applied prior to the deadline, that they would have their rights protected until their applications had been decided (as set out in law); they would also have the means of proving their protected rights if required;
- the latest figures for Plymouth (as of 31 March 2021) was 10,820; the vast majority of which had received an outcome of either settled for pre-settled status; the figures were broken down as follows -
 - 6,390 settled status (increased by 430 was 5,960);
 - 3,570 pre settled status (increased by 400 was 3,170);
 - 300 other (increased by 80 was 220);
- due to the end of the EU Settlement Scheme, there had been changes to the right to work checks from 1 July 2021; EU passports or ID cards were no longer valid proof of the right to work; an online right to work check would now be required;

(b) the Graduate Route -

- this immigration route opened on 1 July 2021 and allowed international graduates to start their careers in the UK, after they had finished their studies at a UK university;
- this provided an opportunity for talented international graduates, who had graduated from a UK university, to stay in the UK and either work, or look for work at any skill level for a period of at least two years;

(c) EU adopted 'adequacy' decisions -

- the decisions mean that UK businesses and organisations would be able to continue to receive personal data from the EU and EEA without the need to put additional arrangements in place with European counterparts;

- the European Scrutiny Committee had launched an enquiry into the new bodies set up to manage the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and to examine the Government's approach to maximising its influence on them;
- (d) to date, there were 67 total trade agreements in effect (at varying stages); 37 fully ratified, 26 provisional applications and 4 bridging mechanisms;
- (e) a new Subsidy Control Bill had been introduced to Parliament on 30 June 2021; the bill sets out the Government's legislative proposal for a new UK subsidy control regime and covered a number of key areas including -
- providing a legal framework for public authorities to award subsidies in line with the subsidy control principles; there would be a statutory duty for public authorities to consider these principles and only award a subsidy if it was consistent with these principles;
 - the introduction of a number of prohibitions to prevent public authorities granting subsidies with distortive or harmful economic impacts;
- (f) Total Allowable Catches (TACs)
- the deadline for agreeing guidelines for the setting of the Total Allowable Catches was at the beginning of July 2021 for stocks of fish subject to quotas;
 - however, the UK did conclude negotiations in mid-June 2021; the catch limits had been set for 70 fish stocks and superseded the previous provisional catch limits for 2021; the total value of the UK-EU fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 was approximately £333m (this equated to 160,000 tonnes);
- (g) the transitional period would end on 31 December 2021; this period allowed more time for exporters to obtain the suppliers' declarations needed to prove the origin of their exports;
- (h) Freezone – the International Trade Committee had published the Government's response to its report on UK freeports.

The Committee raised whether –

- (i) the Marine Management Organisation's Fisheries and Seafood scheme had been open to Plymouth, and if so, whether an initiative had been put forward;

response: Kevin McKenzie advised that he would need to check this information and provide an a response outside of this forum;

- (j) the Council had consulted with the city's fishing industry and stakeholders, as to whether they were content with the fishing catch limits;

response: the Fisheries Group which comprised of representatives from the fishing industry met on a regular basis; the industry's response to the catch limits would need to be tested; it was unlikely that there would be a change in the position with regard to the scope of the negotiations; at the Committee's Select Committee Review held in February 2021, the industry representatives had not been happy with the fishing allocation, although an update would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee relating to the agreed specific species quota.

The Committee considered that an impact assessment should be undertaken on the funding Plymouth had received through its successful bidding process for various Government funding options (and for this information to be included in future policy briefings).

The Chair advised that if the fishing industry within the city were not happy with their allocation then any data would be helpful in order to effectively lobby Government.

Order of Business

With the permission of the Chair the order of business was changed and is reflected in the minutes.

8. Mayflower 400 Update

Councillor Mark Deacon (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport) and Charles Hackett (Charles Hackett (Chief Executive Officer Mayflower 400) provided an update on the Mayflower 400 which highlighted the following –

- (a) the Mayflower 400 had delivered successfully across a huge range of activities, through strong partnership and with determination and adaptability to drive Plymouth and partner objectives, despite the challenges;
- (b) whilst the pandemic had significantly impacted the delivery of the programme, the majority of the original cultural programme had been successfully rescheduled and had been taking place through late 2020 where appropriate and through the summer of 2021;

- (c) projects had been rescheduled to new dates, or had been redesigned for different delivery such as through digital means; only a small number had been cancelled, such as the Four Nations Ceremony on 11 July 2021;
- (d) Mayflower 400 had continued to -
 - promote the city regionally, nationally and internationally;
 - engage residents and give different communities varied ways to take part;
 - deliver a cultural programme, whilst also supporting the cultural producers and performers involved during this highly challenging period for their sector;
 - lay foundations for the visitor sector recovery and future international travel and cruises;
- (e) some individual events from the Mayflower 400 programme, led by partners and funded through grants from bodies such as the Arts Council England would now take place after September 2021 due to the pandemic (such a 'This Land' by the Theatre Royal and Illuminate led by Real Ideas Organisation);
- (f) the 2021 events had built on the success of the content delivered to date which had reached a cumulative audience of over four billion people through associated communications activity, which had supported Plymouth's positioning as a vibrant destination and Britain's Ocean City;
- (g) national and international marketing activity supporting the wider Plymouth destination activity would continue through to the end of 2021 and beyond; Mayflower 400 had exceeded its targeted visitor sector growth by 10%, as of 2019; the programme had been aligned with the wider pandemic recovery activity to ensure it made a full contribution to the city's recovery as it transitioned out of lockdown.

The Committee discussed the following key issues –

- (h) whether the impact of the media coverage was known (given that this would have been impacted by the pandemic) and the financial impact this had on the city;
- (i) whether the £16m committed by the Arts Council England into Plymouth's core arts and culture capacity over five years, was part of the Mayflower 400 project and if the funding would be ongoing;
- (j) the importance of building on the success of the Mayflower 400 project and continuing to maintain the momentum with future projects/events;

- (k) the importance of not only recognising the community involvement in the events that had taken place but also the unity of cross party working in order to continue to secure funding streams;
- (l) the level of international engagement with the Mayflower 400 project and whether there was an international appetite to travel to Plymouth once the Covid restrictions had been lifted.

The Committee considered that the Mayflower 400 project had left an amazing legacy for the city (such as the Mayflower trails, the restoration of the Elizabethan House, the provision of the new bins and signage and improvements to the waterfront) which ensured that Plymouth had become a real visitor destination. The Committee wished to commend all the teams and stakeholders involved with this project.

The Committee requested that the level of international engagement was included in the wrap up report due to be considered by the Committee in February 2022.

The Committee agreed to endorse continuing Plymouth City Council's support of the Mayflower 400 programme to its conclusion in 2021 and to endorse that some projects in the wider Mayflower 400 commemoration would finally deliver after September 2021 but that the core programme would be concluded in September 2021 with wrap up activities from that point.

9. **Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021: July 2021 Progress Reports**

Councillor Maddie Bridgeman (Cabinet for Environment and Street Scene), Councillor Jonathan Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Philip Robinson (Service Director for Street Services) and Paul Elliott (Low Carbon City Manager) presented the reports which highlighted the following -

- (a) Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 (CEAP) -
 - the report sets out the progress, as at July 2021 and outlined the actions in the Plan as agreed by City Council at its meeting held on 25 January 2021;
 - the overall outcome of the plan was to strive to achieve net zero in the city by 2030; the Council intended to lead by example and was putting in place a number of activities this year to demonstrate this leadership and engage with residents, young people and the business community;
 - as of July 2021, 88 actions out of 89 had been started and activities were underway in order to achieve their respective targets; eight actions were already achieved;

- 90% of all actions were achieved in part and were progressing well; the actions reported as 'underway' were ongoing activities taking place throughout 2021; these actions were currently on course to be achieved in 2021;
- eight actions had been completed (9%), 80 actions underway (90%) and not yet progressing | (1%) (89 in total);
- one action had been identified as being at risk of not being fully achieved in this calendar year; this related to exploring mortgages for sustainable energy with South West Mutual; this option was raised informally with South West Mutual however, the Mutual was still applying for its banking licence and envisaged launching the bank in 2022; it was therefore likely that this action would not be achieved in 2021;
- a number of departments of the Council were working proactively with partners and residents to offer meaningful engagement activities this year which included -
 - action 2.62: engage with the Youth Parliament to ensure that the voice of the children and young people was heard in relation to the Climate Emergency;
 - action 2.63: organising an annual Climate Emergency Summit for young people;
 - action 2.64: organise a themed day at Plymouth Libraries on the topic of climate change;

(b) Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021 (CCRP2) -

- the report described the position, after six months, in relation to the actions set out in the CCRP2, agreed by the City Council at its meeting on 25 January 2021; it highlighted the successful progress of all the actions and described some of the key achievements to date;
- the overall outcome of the plan was to strive to reduce corporate carbon emissions to zero by 2030; the Council intended to lead by example and was putting in place a number of activities this year to demonstrate leadership combining behaviour change with hands on actions to remove sources of emissions;

- as at July 2021 and six months into the second CCRP, all of the 25 actions had been started with activities underway to achieve their respective targets; whilst all the actions would likely take the full 12 months to achieve their targets, all were progressing well, with no immediate signs of any issues which might compromise completion;
- 88% of all actions were underway to be completed; there were no actions that were not progressing yet; three actions had already been completed;
- key achievements which had been completed included -
 - a new tracker system that captured and reported the carbon dioxide emissions from all fleet vehicles;
 - changes to the Council's Corporate Plan had been made and were signed at the City Council meeting held on 14 June 2021;
 - the roll out of the e-learning training programme on climate change for staff and councillors;
- activities of note that had been progressed to date included -
 - £5m of funding had been secured from two applications to the Public Decarbonisation Fund;
 - £36,500 had been secured from Heat Networks Delivery Unit (Round 10) toward district energy;
 - seven vehicles with electric lifts had been purchased and were now operating as part of the fleet.

The Committee discussed the following key issues -

- (c) whether a specific target had been set for reducing carbon emissions from vehicles;
- (d) as a result of South West Mutual being unable to attain its bank licence until 2022, whether other options had been explored or another provider had been considered;
- (e) whether an indication of the cost of the nine charging hubs could be provided, together with the overall total of the EV charging points that would be installed across the city;
- (f) sought clarification as to the location of the new community solar farm;

- (g) whether consideration had been given to developing groups of EV charging points for taxis around the city and in particular the city centre (such as the initiative that had been implemented in London called the 'iron lung');
- (h) with regard to the recent decision to scrap the charges for rubble and domestic waste at Chelson Meadow, how this fitted politically with the waste hierarchy in changing behaviours (Plymouth was now the only local authority in the South West that did not charge for this type of waste) and how did this decision fit with climate change;
- (i) why the decision had been taken to remove the need for residents to register for the garden waste scheme and how the garden waste rounds would now be managed; the registration for this service had been key in ensuring that this waste service was more efficient and provided a better service for residents, whilst saving money and reducing the Council's carbon footprint (as crews were not having to drive around looking for garden waste bags/bins);
- (j) with regard to the recent decision not to charge for the disposal of rubble and domestic waste, whether in the short term, there was evidence that fly tipping in the city had decreased;
- (k) whilst it was pleasing to hear that the work of the ambassadors would continue (with the focus on waste and travel) and also the conversations with Cabinet colleagues, what was the plan for digital engagement which would provide an opportunity for residents to engage in the climate change agenda;
- (l) sought clarification on the introduction and aims of the new active travel campaign;
- (m) whether consultation with local groups would be undertaken in the summer of 2021, regarding the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan, or if this would be delayed;
- (n) whether there were plans for an improved engagement process regarding the 'leave your car at home day' scheduled to be held in September 2021, how the success of the previous event and the forthcoming event would be measured and whether data from last year's event had been captured;
- (o) whether work would be undertaken with private home owners and businesses to help them to become energy efficient (such as changing to energy saving light bulbs);
- (p) to what extent was the Council engaging with the business community, not just the largest employers in the South West but the small and medium enterprises who would have a huge contribution to make in the climate change agenda;

- (q) whether in future reports information could be provided on how the business community was being engaged and incentivised;
- (r) the Resurgam Charter had been worked on for a number of years and across Administrations and with a number of organisations including the Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Federation and Build Plymouth, with the aim of 'building back better'; the Charter did include how businesses were run which was especially important for small businesses; businesses that signed up for the charter did receive support and it was considered that this may be an opportunity in engaging with businesses on the climate change agenda;
- (s) considered that there was an opportunity for the Council to both approach and engage with small businesses through the Trading Standards department's 'buy with confidence' scheme; current communications relating to the scheme did not include environment or climate change issues;
- (t) it was also considered that the Council had an opportunity to use the data collated from the business grants, to engage with the business community in the city, in order to assist them to reduce their carbon footprint;
- (u) whether work could be undertaken with organisations, tenants/ customers who rented buildings from Plymouth City Council, to investigate the feasibility of installing solar panels on the roofs of the buildings; this would help in reducing overheads whilst sharing the surplus electricity that had been generated;
- (v) sought confirmation that grass cutting would not increase, as this not only reduced the Council's carbon footprint by not using equipment to cut the grass but also increased carbon capture; (it should be noted that a large number of residents had been happy with how the Council had managed its grass land); it would be disappointing if the wild areas and the bee corridors were lost due to a change in the policy;
- (w) the importance of reviewing the grass cutting policy to ensure that the Council got it right and the ability to address the issues that had been raised by residents which included children being unable to play in green areas where the grass had been kept long, dogs getting ticks due to walking through long grass and the inability of a veterans wheelchair team to play rugby due to the long grass; there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour in certain wards and whether this could be attributed to grassed areas where young people congregated not being cut;

- (x) with regard to the review of the grass cutting policy, it should be recognised that it would be difficult to keep all residents happy.

The Chair welcomed the six month update on both the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan and whilst there were many positive issues raised, he would like to see areas of weakness such as issues that the Council had not got quite right in future reporting to the Committee.

The Committee requested the following -

- (y) a copy of the draft Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan, when available;
- (z) provide details of the future model for the 'leave your car at home day' initiative;
- (aa) provide the data captured from the previous year's 'leave your car at home day' initiative;
- (bb) to include in future reports to the Committee, how the Council was engaging with the business community and whether businesses were being incentivised to undertake carbon reductions initiatives.

The Committee noted the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2021, July 2021 progress report (including details set out in Appendix 2 and 2a); and the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan (CCRP) 2021, July 2021 progress report (including details set out in Appendix 3 and 3a).

10. **Plymouth and South Devon Freezone**

The Leader (Councillor Nick Kelly), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) and Richard May (Head of Oceansgate and Marine Investment) presented the report which highlighted the following –

- (a) the Plymouth and South Devon Freezone would help the city to bounce back from the Covid pandemic and grow the local economy; the Freezone was expected to generate thousands of new jobs and over £100m of new investment over the next 10 years;
- (b) as Britain's Ocean City, with its natural harbour and direct deep water access to the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean, Plymouth was ideally located for accessing European and global markets; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had predicted that the global ocean economy would be worth more than £2 trillion by 2030;

- (c) the Freezone would build on the city's strengths to drive growth across the region; this would harness the power of Plymouth's marine economy to drive economic growth and working with Devon as the Local Transport Authority, fund road network improvements and unlock under-utilised employment land at Sherford and Langage;
- (d) the proposal directly targeted key growth areas such as marine manufacturing, wind and wave energy and marine autonomy; the success would bring in an immediate injection of at least £20m of capital; with the locally raised matched element being funded through the business rates uplift that the Freezone would generate, there would be no diversion of Council funding from other priorities;
- (e) it would provide an opportunity to deliver clean growth and the high quality jobs the city needed for the future, whilst protecting its unique historic and natural infrastructure;
- (f) in the early stages, delivering the Freezone required the Council to pass through a series of 'gates'; in each case the Council had to evidence that certain criteria had been met, in order to unlock some benefit; the first of these related to having governance structures in place; these had been agreed by the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government;
- (g) the next requirement would be to submit a capacity funding application setting out the city's budget for 2021/22; following a process of negotiation, a budget would be submitted which would take the Council up to the point of submitting an outline business case; it was anticipated that there would be a further opportunity to submit a capacity funding claim once that milestone had been reached; an initial payment of £300k had been received in late June 2021; whilst this had been welcomed, the Council also needed to maximise the use of internal existing resource to support the development of the outline business case;
- (h) the next steps would be to establish an implementation plan and deliver the outline business case in the autumn; currently, the implementation plan included seven projects each of which had a lead officer who would be responsible for an overall programme board for delivery;
- (i) each of these projects encompassed a number of discreet work streams and small groups of officers with relevant skills sets, drawn from the three local authorities; other key partners would be assigned to each one; in areas where the expertise available from the partners was inadequate, the Council would bring in consultancy support to bolster in-house capacity;

- (j) the purpose of the programme delivery team was to deliver the Freezone; to ensure the outline business case was delivered within the required timeline; a tighter core team of officers had been established to work specifically on the business case supported by the same team employed to write the successful bid.

Richard May (Head of Oceansgate and Marine Investment) provided a presentation to the Committee (which would be circulated outside of this forum).

The Committee discussed the following key issues -

- (k) how the Freezone would help the disadvantage areas within the city, the environment and how the tax site benefits (particularly employers paying 0% employer NICs on salaries of new employees earning up to £25k per annum for three years) would benefit local communities;
- (l) the importance of ensuring that the infrastructure was able to support the increase in the traffic generated by the Freezone (such as the provision of sufficient parking in the sites that had been identified for business growth);
- (m) how the Freezone would work with the conservation areas within the city;
- (n) whether the strategic network (such as the A38) would be improved in readiness for the increase in traffic flow to the sites identified within the Freezone, in particular Langage and Sherford;
- (o) whether the outline business case could provide information on how the Freezone would support the city's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 (including any mitigating actions) and whether the maritime decarbonisation could be measured and this information shared;
- (p) the importance of ensuring that the issues agreed with both residents and businesses as part of the Joint Local Plan were taken on board when developing the sites identified as part of the Freezone;
- (q) whether the improvement works to the Deep Lane junction would be brought forward, as part of the creation of an efficient, sustainable transport network.

The Committee requested that a response was provided, outside of this forum, as to whether the work on the Deep Lane junction would be brought forward, as part of the Freezone.

The Committee noted the report and the progress being made in the relatively short period of time, since the Plymouth and South Devon Freezone was announced as one of eight successful bids for Freeport status.

11. **Work Programme**

The Committee discussed its work programme for 2021/22 and agreed to include the following items on its programme -

- (a) September 2021 meeting -
 - Bus Improvement Plan;
 - Economic update (Recovery and Start Ups and an Analysis the Impact of the Pandemic);

- (b) December 2021 meeting -
 - National Marine Park;
 - Plymouth Culture Plan Annual Update;
 - Visitor Plan Annual Update;
 - Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2022 (scrutiny prior to Full Council);
 - Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2022 (CCRP) (scrutiny prior to Full Council);

- (c) February 2022 meeting -
 - Mayflower 400 Wrap Up (including international engagement);
 - Box Opening Review and 2022 Programme;
 - Plymouth Plan Annual Report;
 - Planning Reform Bill;
 - Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021 Outturn Report (six month update);
 - Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 Outturn Report (six month update);

- (d) items to be scheduled -
 - Plymouth and South Devon Freezone;
 - sustainable transport in the city (including taxi provision);
 - Environment Bill;
 - Corporate Plan.

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