

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 December 2022
Title of Report:	Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader)
Lead Strategic Director:	Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)
Author:	Caroline Cozens (Head of Strategic Programmes) and Richard May (Interim CEX PASD Freeport)
Contact Email:	caroline.cozens@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Scrutiny Report – PASD Freeport Update
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport is the result of a successful bid submitted by Plymouth City Council, supported by public and private sector partners in February 2021. The Freeport programme is a flagship and highly ambitious programme to create thousands of high quality jobs and play a crucial part in post COVID19 recovery, helping to build back better, driving clean growth and contributing to levelling up agendas. At its core, the Freeport programme has three objectives:

1. National hubs for global trade and investment
2. Creating hotbeds of innovation
3. Promote regeneration through the creation of high skilled jobs.

We last updated scrutiny in February 2022 and this report provides members with an update on our progress including:

- Submission and approval of the Full Business Case
- Setting up the company and mobilising the Governance arrangements
- Staffing and recruitment
- Seed funding capital projects
- Trade and Investment

Recommendations and Reasons

Recommendation – Note the progress update Plymouth and South Devon Freeport (Update report attached)

Reason – Acknowledge the progress that has been made on signing off the Full Business Case (FBC), mobilisation of the new company and associated governance, recruitment to key roles and the accountable body (Plymouth City Council) responsibilities associated with our memorandum of understanding with government and associated £25m seed capital funding grant.

Recommendation – Request a further progress report on the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport in 6 months' time.

Reason – The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport will have made more progress in terms of mobilisation and seed capital project development and will have submitted its first annual reporting to government, complying with the agreed monitoring and evaluation framework. It will also be able to update further on securing key strategic investment.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Option - Officers could not return to Scrutiny to present further updates on progress of this flagship initiative. This would not give the Scrutiny members the chance to understand, check and challenge the development of the Freeport and further influence it.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport will help us to achieve strategic objectives from the Plymouth Plan:

SO2 - Strengthening Plymouth's role in the region

SO3 - Delivering the international city

SO11 – Delivering high quality development

SO12 – Delivering infrastructure and investment

And strongly supports the priorities we have set in our Corporate Plan: -

- economic growth that benefits as many people as possible
- quality jobs and valuable skills

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

This update report has no direct financial implications. See previous scrutiny report regarding the approved allocations and financial impacts of the Freeport as per the approved Full Business Case.

Financial Risks

This update report has no direct financial risks.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Full Business Case sets out our ambitious plans to ensure that the Freeport contributes positively to our Climate Emergency Action Plan setting an overarching target that is consistent with our commitment to achieve a carbon net zero position by 2030. Our Freeport will act as a catalyst, helping us to accelerate the implementation of existing technologies (such as electric vehicles and hydrogen) as well as pioneering new solutions through our Innovation Hotbed. Similarly, our investment in port infrastructure will facilitate carbon savings from short sea shipping.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The Freeport Team actively manage risk in line with Council procedures. Risk registers are reviewed and shared for each meeting of the Board of Directors (currently every two months) with key strategic and operational risks discussed at the meetings. Risks are also part of our reporting to Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities in relation to the wider Freeport but also in relation to the seed capital projects.

The Freeport will contribute significantly to social regeneration by delivering a pipeline of jobs across the spectrum of employment from entry level to higher skilled/high value with upskilling opportunities. This will in turn help to alleviate child poverty. - We completed an Equality Impact Assessment to inform our Outline Business Case, which is kept under active review. Based on this assessment the Freeport Shadow Board adopted a diversity statement in July 2021, which included a commitment to an Equality Objective aimed at increasing the participation of women in STEM occupations.

- The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Company has its own health and safety and corporate policies that have been established and are now active as part of recruiting and employing new staff.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	PASD Freeport PCC Scrutiny Update PPT							
B	PASD Freeport PCC Scrutiny Update WORD							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plymouth and South Devon Freeport. Scrutiny update 23rd February 2022							
PASD Freeport EIA							

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Draffan											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 29/11/2022											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mark Shayer approved by email											
Date approved: 29/11/2022											

