

# Cabinet

Thursday 8 December 2022

## PRESENT:

Councillor Shayer, in the Chair.  
Councillors Dr Mahony, Patel, Smith, Stoneman and Wakeham.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bingley, Drean and Carlyle

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and finished at 3.15 pm.

*Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at [www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://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.*

## 70. Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made in accordance with the code of conduct in respect of items under consideration at the meeting –

Name	Minute Number	Reason	Interest
Councillor Mark Shayer	74	Is member of the Plymouth Freeport Board	Private

## 71. Minutes

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022.

## 72. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

## 73. Chair's Urgent Business

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

## 74. Leader's Announcements

The Deputy Leader gave his announcements and highlighted –

- (a) Plymouth and South Devon Freeport was a flagship and a highly ambitious programme to create thousands of high quality jobs and would play a crucial part in

the post COVID-19 recovery in Plymouth, helping to build back better, driving clean growth, and a contribution to the levelling up agendas.

- (b) A Freeport model uses a simplified Tax and Custom benefits aimed at attracting new and expanding businesses as well as attracting foreign direct investments.
- (c) In addition to this, the government was also providing £25m of seed capital, which needed to be locally matched to unlock the site infrastructure, such as site preparation Groundworks, roads and transportation infrastructure.
- (d) The Plymouth South Devon Freeports would supercharge the South West economy by building on our region's unique national capabilities in marine Defence and Space to form a globally impactful clusters and a UK Innovation Superpower.
- (e) Our outstanding location means that Freeport was a prime for growing marine autonomy renewables and innovative businesses.
- (f) Freeport represents a unique opportunity to level up, address historical challenges and leverage new and exciting opportunities to transform the economy of Plymouth and South Devon through three key objectives -
  - 1. create a national hub for trade and investment.
  - 2. promote regeneration and job creation.
  - 3. create a hotbed of innovation.
- (g) In summary our Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Would -
  - 1. Enable new employment land to be bought forward at the three sites of South Yard, Langage and Sherford
  - 2. Support a new £30m Innovation Centre at Oceansgate
  - 3. Provide a major expansion plan for Princess Yachts
  - 4. Include £29m investment from Local Authorities
  - 5. Leverage £250m private sector investment
  - 6. Deliver over 3,500 jobs

## 75. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor James Stoneman (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) provided an update and highlighted –

- (a) Climate Connections website had now gone live. The purpose of the website was to engage the residents of Plymouth, as well as businesses and organisations to contribute to our action of net zero by 2030.

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) provided an update and highlighted –

- (b) We had the money that came from Central Government earlier on in the year, which was the 150 pound energy rebate scheme. And that scheme was completed at the end of November.
- (c) In total, almost 16 million was paid out to over 106,000 eligible households in bands A to D, every eligible household received a 150 pound payment, either by bank transfer, cash payment or credit towards their council tax. Some of those were done as a cash voucher where we didn't have details for people, and a number of those were due to expire by the end of November. So they've been cancelled, and those people have had it credited to their council tax account instead.
- (d) Everybody that was eligible for that 150 pounds has received it, which was a really important thing to share. We also had the Council Tax Discretionary Rebate Fund, with a fund of 556,500 pounds. And that has also been completed. We ended up deciding that eligible households who received some form of reduction in bands, E to H would qualify for that. Which meant, everybody who is in receipt of some sort of council tax discount was helped. Because we also topped up all those in A to D who received Council Tax Support with an additional payment as well.

Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport) gave an update and highlighted –

- (e) MPO funding. So we've received quite a substantial sum over the next three years, which will keep our culture leisure and heritage projects going.
- (f) I have mentioned in previous Cabinet meetings about the work we want to do with community groups and I am pleased to announce that we've agreed a way forward with Nudge and also Firestone on their projects. We just got a few little bits sort with them. Once they're done, we'll be signing contracts with them.
- (g) A big thank you to all the team under my portfolio. They've been working extremely hard finishing off last year's updates and preparing for next year. And we have an exciting programme to put out for next year.

Councillor Dr John Mahony (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) gave an update and highlighted –

- (h) Senior practitioner, Lydia Libby from our operational Adult Safeguarding team has just won a national award at the annual National Safeguarding Adults Boards Excellence Awards. In this section with large number of nominations Lydia was crowned partnership champion for her work in a role that seeks to support other agencies and people leading complex lives, often with coexistence, issues of poor mental health, homelessness, substance dependence and self neglect. Lydia was described as someone who goes about their work with humility and goes beyond the statutory safeguarding remit and touches a range of professional fields, largely

concerning extremely vulnerable individuals who had high levels of risk, who would undoubtedly come to harm without the interventions that she supports so ably.

Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Finance) gave an update and highlighted –

- (i) I have one other additional piece of good news, which has come through to us. We've just been awarded under the regulator's pioneer fund 850,000 pounds to develop a new regulatory framework for the operation of marine autonomous systems.

76. **Finance Monitoring Report Month 7**

Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy) introduced the report and highlighted –

- (a) This report sets out the revenue monitoring position of the Council forecast to the end of the financial year 2022/23 as at October, Period 7.
- (b) We were now reporting a net overspend of £4.104m. Last month we reported to Council an overspend of £5.991m. This was an improvement of £1.887m in the last month.
- (c) It has been said before, if we can get to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (December's report) at below £3m we will be in a very strong position for the final push through the last quarter of the financial year.
- (d) We should not overlook the £6m of non-controllable costs this year - £3.3m relates to energy price inflation for example.
- (e) We also have the impact of the Covid-19 legacy costs in adults and children's social care and the number of people requiring emergency bed and breakfast accommodation.
- (f) We would continue working hard to achieve a balanced position by the end of March. I would like to thank all officers and Cabinet colleagues for their efforts to date.

Cabinet noted the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 7 as set out in this report in the sum of £4.104m.

77. **Corporate Plan Performance Update, Q2 2022-23**

Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy) introduced the report and highlighted –

- (a) The report was provided to update cabinet on the performance of the council in terms of progress in delivering against the Corporate Plan. This was discussed at

Performance and Finance Scrutiny last week and I am happy to reflect feedback from that discussion today.

- (b) This performance report provided an opportunity to recognise improving and strong performance, but it must be set against the context in which the Council and its partners were currently working.
- (c) We all appreciate that these are very trying times for the City, Council and residents.
- (d) The financial challenges that face us are unprecedented, but we were still working hard to improve performance and deliver better services to our residents.
- (e) The employment rate in the city has seen a 2.2% increase from quarter four 2021/22
- (f) The latest data for quarter one 2022/23 showed that at 77.7%, Plymouth had a higher employment rate than the rest of the country (75.5%). In real terms this increased the number of people in employment in Plymouth from 126,900 in the 12 month to March 2022 to 131,200 in the 12 months to June 2022.
- (g) There had been further reductions to the percentage of repeat referrals into Children's Social Care. Whilst the percentage reduction looks small this meant 68 fewer repeat referrals in the 12 months to the end of quarter two. This was a better level than both our statistical neighbours and the England average and shows the impact our services are making on children's lives.
- (h) The report also highlights some performance challenges which we continue to address:
  - (i) The rate of children on multiple child protection plans increased slightly in quarter two and was not achieving our target. Whilst this represents a small change in quarter, overall performance in this area was of concern and the service was working hard to ensure that this improves going forward.
  - (j) Sickness rates had increased in quarter two. These figures were inclusive of COVID-19 sickness which, alongside cold and flu like viruses, was one of the main reasons for short term sickness in quarter 2. This was of concern and was raised at scrutiny last week. An action plan had been put in place which should review policy and procedures, proactive case management and ensuring training is available to all managers to support them in managing sickness.
- (k) The other question raised at scrutiny was regarding the financial impact of our early cessation of garden waste collections. Whilst this was a tough decision to take. We were facing a very serious financial position which was largely due to national issues beyond our control and we had to act decisively if we are to be in with a chance of balancing the books at the end of the financial year. We estimated that stopping collections when we did saved around £200,000.

Cabinet noted the report.

78. **Plymouth Habitat Banking Vehicle**

Councillor Bill Wakeham (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene) and Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) introduced the report and highlighted –

It was proposed in the report to establish a Habitat Banking Vehicle – an ‘HBV’. The purpose was to deliver a local solution to the new duties set out within the Environment Act 2021 in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain which would come into force Autumn 2023. The new duty would drive a new market where biodiversity units could be created and sold.

As a result of the new duty in the Environment Act developer contributions in their current form related to local greenspace would discontinue. Without developing an HBV which aligned with the new duties there was an estimated loss of £328k annual income for PCC to enhance the environment for people and nature.

The Business Case sets out the opportunity to proactively respond to the new requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain - to develop a new sustainable revenue stream and business model, which would enhance our green and blue spaces and maximise the benefits for our communities.

The options analysis within the business case recommends that the establishment of a HBV at arm’s length to PCC was the preferred approach. This was because it maximises the benefits available, at lowest risk to PCC and delivers the most viable operating model.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Approve the principle of creating a Habitat Banking Vehicle (HBV) as set out in the Business Case.
2. Delegate to the Strategic Director of Place the approval to work to scope pilot sites and associated background infrastructure required to trial a habitat banking approach as set out in the Business Case.
3. Approve recommendation that details of implementing the HBV including scope of services, final structuring, contracting and governance arrangements (including appointing directors) to be brought back for Cabinet decision as soon as practicable but within 12 months.
4. Approve the Business Case.

79. **Business Case for the procurement of a Domestic Abuse Service**

Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport), Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager) and Laura Griffiths (Commissioning Officer) presented the report and highlighted –

The purpose of the report was to describe the commissioning plan to put in place a new Domestic Abuse service for Plymouth and to draw on our learning from those with lived experience and ensure the city is meeting its new statutory duties. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. Part 4 of the Act placed new statutory duties on tier 1 Local Authorities to provide safe accommodation for victims and their children, alongside a number of reporting and governance requirements.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Approve the Business Case and procurement process to commission a new domestic abuse service.

2. Delegate the decision and to award the contract to the Strategic Director for People