

Cabinet

Tuesday 17 January 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.

Councillor Shayer, Vice Chair.

Councillors Drean, Carlyle, Dr Mahony, Patel, Smith, Stoneman and Wakeham.

The meeting started at 16:00 and finished at 16:57.

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.

80. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

81. **Minutes**

Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 08 December 2022.

82. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

83. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

84. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader gave his announcements and highlighted –

- (a) Congratulated Councillor Noble and Councillor McLay on their election;
- (b) On 02 January 2023, along with senior members of the Council and the Lord Major, attended a reception on board the Brittany Ferries Flagship Pont Aven to celebrate a very special milestone;
- (c) The event which came out of a meeting with the Leader and CEO Christophe Mathieu in the summer brought together civic representatives from across Brittany, Devon, Cornwall and Wales along with long term employees of Brittany Ferries to celebrate the significance of the relationship between Plymouth, Brittany and Brittany Ferries;

- (d) Marked the significance of this amazing milestone. Brittany Ferries was formed by a Farmers co-operative to ship produce to UK markets and quickly became a household name in European travel;
- (e) The business is owned by the same model today and Brittany Ferries Chairman, Pierre BIHAN-POUDEC, is still a farmer. The sight of the ferry coming into Plymouth Sound was one of Plymouth's iconic moments and is a major economic driver both in terms of tourism, freight and international connectivity;
- (f) The Government was putting through the Fair Wages Bill for Seafarers and wished that well as it progressed through Parliament;
- (g) The relationship between the Council, port owner and ABP has never been stronger. This administration had been focussed on the growth opportunity for our ports;
- (h) On behalf of the Cabinet the Leader formally wished Brittany Ferries a happy 50th Birthday and here's to the next 50;
- (i) The Leader met with the Vice Chancellor of Plymouth University to consider any potential opportunity for a city Investment Zone as referenced in the Autumn Statement. We were investigating opportunities how to align this with the new Plymouth and South Devon Freeport and capitalise upon our globally recognised marine and maritime research and innovation strengths across the city;
- (j) I attended the House of Lords Parliamentary reception last week celebrating the establishment of the Great South West (GSW). It was hosted by Lord Berkeley. A number of the region's MPs attended the event including the Chair of the GSW – Simon Jupp MP;
- (k) At the GSW the Leader highlighted the top priority as transport connectivity.

85. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Jonathan Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport) provided an update and highlighted –

- (a) Velocity which was the machine that would be attending to potholes that we have on trial. This would be starting in February in various locations throughout the city;
- (b) had finally managed to get meetings with National Highways to discuss issues and would be having discussions with them shortly;
- (c) The Capability and Ambition Fund was a revenue grant that enabled councils to promote walking and cycling within their area. Through behaviour change and initiatives and future scheme developments;
- (d) Plymouth was invited to bid for £190,000 of funding and successfully secured £208,000 pounds, being one of the councils whose funding exceeded the bid amongst

strength from all the other proposals in the categories. We would use this for developing a pipeline of tomorrow's sustainable transport projects, including development work for the routes under Colesdown hill, which is a cycle path going all the way out to Sherford;

- (e) Safer School Streets Programme, which was the temporary closing outside of schools to encourage more walking and cycling from the area, and to continue our Bike Kids Plus Programme, engaging with school children to encourage the uptake of cycling as schools;
- (f) Following the difficult decisions on the budget that we had to make at our Cabinet meeting on 10 November 2022 and in particular, the changes we reluctantly had to make to some of our non-commercial bus routes. I had been working tirelessly behind the scenes with many transport companies and operators since then, to see what could be done to support some of the routes that would be lost. The decisions that were made in November protected nine of the 14 routes. I am therefore delighted to announce that we will be able to reintroduce bus services to the Merryfield and Holly park areas of the city;
- (g) Our sustainable transport team had been working with their counterparts at Devon County Council and Plymouth City Bus who have been successful in securing a replacement bus service to Merryfield which would be provided by a rerouting of the current 59 service;
- (h) This is a route Plymouth City Bus operates under contract to Devon County Council. The new service will commence on Monday the 30th of January. It will operate four journeys per day. In each direction reinstating links for Merryfield residents to both the Ridgeway and the City Centre, as well as expanding travel opportunities to take in Sparkwell, Shaughprior and Bickleigh. The timetable also had a peak journey to and from the City Centre, which will hopefully help generate commuter patronage on this route;
- (i) For the first time in several years, this would mean the residents of Merryfield now have a Saturday service as well. And all this would be provided at no cost to the City Centre;
- (j) Discussions with Plymouth City Bus have also led to the reintroduction of a service from Holly Park and Ringmore way providing links to West Park and St Budeaux square and the City Centre;
- (k) Also starting on Monday the 30 January 2023, the new service would compromise four journeys a day in each direction, Monday to Friday. While this service was more limited than what was there before. I hope residents will find the service helpful to access local services, doctors, dentists and banking. I should emphasise that Plymouth City Bus were providing these services strictly on a commercial basis. Therefore the service being provided is on a use it or lose it basis and as such will be reviewed after six months;

- (l) I would like to express my thanks to Devon County Council and Plymouth City Bus for working with me and the Sustainable Transport team to enable these services to be reinstated.

Councillor Bill Wakeham (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene) provided an update and highlighted –

- (m) Added considerably to our transport fleet and have got 22 new vehicles in total. These vehicles were necessary because we were wasting so many hours and so many vehicles in the dock all the time. So we have made some really good progress here. This would help us in the future this year;
- (n) we've got eight new electric vehicles, mainly vans, and five new refuse trucks. We needed them because we were having quite a few problems with the old ones, they do take a lot of wear and tear;
- (o) we've got one vehicle-mounted boom for tree works, one coldwash street cleaner for the city centre, one new truck and trailer and that includes the two weed rippers that had been essential in controlling our back lanes this year;
- (p) This year, we're way ahead on controlling the weed situation. Last year, we had a few problems with contractors. But this year, we're way ahead of the game. The winter tree programme was going well with about 600 trees planted so far this year with a lot more to do;
- (q) Thanked all the officers and staff who worked through Christmas and the New Year. They've done such an excellent job and I can't praise the staff enough for what they've done.

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

- (r) Following the announcement in early December of the deployment of £500m of national funding to support hospital discharge, The PCC Adult Social Care Commissioning Team has worked in partnership at pace to deploy initiatives to support discharges and help with the flow at Derriford Hospital. This includes:
- (s) Commencing 16/1/23 - An investment in additional hours of Independence at Home (Plymouth City Councils Reablement Service) that will increase weekly slots by up to 200% in the short-term and enable more people to return home on discharge from the hospital;
- (t) An enhanced support offer of short term 1:1 staffing with wrap-around multi-disciplinary support from Livewell Southwest for individuals with complex dementia needs being discharged from hospital into a care home (this is live now and supporting 4 people at any one time for periods of up to 2 weeks). This service is working well and already helping to ensure individuals with more complex needs can leave hospital and move to a more appropriate setting as soon as possible once they are medically able to do so;

- (u) Further investment in international recruitment support for social care providers with a focus on supporting growth in the domiciliary care workforce in the coming weeks;
- (v) A step-down day-care service in partnership with Age UK to provide additional short term support for individuals stepping down from either the Short Term Care Centre, Care Hotel, Mount Gould Hospital. This can help people to return home quicker by offering a pathway and an extra support offer for families with Age UK actively taking part in the complex MDT's to identify individuals suitable for this service. This is now live with capacity to support 8 individuals per day;
- (w) Thanked all those involved in the care sector in hospitals or care homes or in domiciliary care services, who particularly over the bad weather in the winter thus far have provided an excellent service.

Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, Children and Young People) provided an update and highlighted –

- (x) Had a very exciting call with Primary Engineering, which is a non-profit organisation and what they do is they go into schools, and they help encourage STEM. We're going to be encouraging 10 schools, and giving them the ability to build their own type of trains and working on it. So it's going to be with primary schools to ignite that passion for STEM for children at a very young age;
- (y) I'd like to highlight and shine a light on our Plymouth Youth Service. They've done a lot of work over the last few months and one of the numbers, which is amazing is the amount of participants that they've engaged across all the groups that they have, and all the workers that they have. Since October was 792 Children. A high number of them was from our detached group, they had worked with 378 children and young people across. They go and visit schools and engage the children to make the streets safer, as well and give them advice and support;
- (z) Thanked everyone who worked really hard on the Christmas packages this year, myself, and lots of volunteers turned up and wrapped boxes. we managed to give out festive fun packages to 244 families and managed to do over 50 family packages, as well as Christmas hampers, and food vouchers. It was all the hard work of our senior youth worker, Kerry Powell-Tuckett, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes and she drove that whole thing for us.

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

- (aa) Regarding the Violence Against Women and Girls work that we've been doing in the City over the last 12 to 18 months;
- (bb) had an email to say that one of the recommendations under the driving culture change needed to challenge male violence against women and girls in the city was that we should share our learning and experience with others. We specifically

recommended as a commission, that local MPs should be called on to host the debate in Westminster, about the work that we've been doing;

- (cc) Plymouth's work on violence against women and girls will be debated for an hour in Westminster Hall on Wednesday, the 25 January 2023, which was great, because that's another recommendation we can say we've delivered on.

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

- (dd) The new programme for the box would commence in February. I don't know what it is yet as the announcement hasn't been made. But there would be new artists commencing February;
- (ee) The events team had been really busy negotiating and trying to finalise an Events Programme for 2023. And I've got a rough draft at the moment. We have a lot of events starting in May, again, we're going to have the Pirate's Weekend and the Ocean City Running Festival with a marathon.

86. **Plymouth's Future: Our Opportunity, Our Delivery Plan - Quarter Two Progress Update 2022 - 23**

Councillor Bingley (Leader) introduced The Delivery Plan - Quarter Two Progress Update 2022 – 23 and highlighted -

- (a) This report provided a progress update against the delivery plan agreed by Cabinet in July 2022 for the second quarter of 2022-23;
- (b) A 40 bedded Care Hotel opened in October/November to support Derriford Hospital through the winter by increasing the amount of complex discharge capacity in the City;
- (c) It is also very exciting that the first homes have been completed at the Stirling Project in Honicknowle with nine service veterans involved in construction and with almost half of the homes to be lived in by veterans themselves. The scheme is due to be completed in September 2023;
- (d) Our achievements include Plymouth and South Devon Freeport becoming operational on 13 October 2022, and since the preparation of this report it was one of the first of eight Freeport's to be given the full green light, with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in December 2022. The approval unlocks millions of pounds of grant seed funding and enables applicable businesses to join and take advantage of the Freeport status;
- (e) Furthermore, along with Plymouth University and Exeter University, Plymouth City Council has been awarded £890k to look at MCA regulatory pilot around Marine Autonomy and Hydrogen Fuel Cells as part of the Port Strategy;

- (f) Arts Council England's investment of more than £12million into the city's cultural organisations over the next 3 years, further recognising Plymouth's role as a cultural and art hotspot;
- (g) We also had the Christmas Light Switch-On events in the City Centre and on the Barbican which drew record crowds;
- (h) And the positive impact of Plymouth hosting Sail GP has also been made available since the last progress report, with a worldwide TV audience of more than 74 million in over 175 countries, attracted almost 16 million views on social media and reaped an economic impact upwards of £10million. As well as getting the seal of approval from the Princess of Wales.

Cabinet noted the report.

87. **Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2023-2024 Revenue and Capital Programme**

Councillor Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport) introduced the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2023 - 24 Revenue and Capital Programme item and highlighted –

- (a) The report set out for consideration and approval, the proposed revenue estimates (budget) for Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council Cabinet and Full Council for 2023/24 and indicative figures for the subsequent three years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27, together with the proposed capital programme;
- (b) The primary reasons identified for the projected deficit are interest rate rises, currently circa 10% and energy costs that have risen exponentially;
- (c) A 30% toll increase was proposed earlier in 2022 with a request made to the SoS for Transport, this was agreed by the SoS and will be implemented in January 2023. The issues identified in 1.6 were not present when the assessment was made, to set the required Toll increase. The increase agreed by the parent authorities reflected the situation at the time with local authority due diligence regarding projected costs;
- (d) The Tamar Bridge Act 1957 sets out the default process to be followed if such deficits arise, namely that the parent authorities, Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council cover that deficit for subsequent recovery at some later stage when the undertaking returns to a surplus position;
- (e) The budget for 2023/24 will meet the requirements of the Councils, in that it is balanced and affordable, even though traffic levels have remained below pre-Covid levels and are currently running at approximately 90% at both crossings, which is in line with the 90% level incorporated in the financial model.

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council:

1. That the 2023/24 revenue estimates and capital programme and the draft 2023-24 Business plan, as set out in the appendices to the JC Report, be approved; and
2. The longer-term forecast to 2026/27 is noted.

88. **Finance Monitoring Report Month 8**

Councillor Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy) introduced the Finance Monitoring Report Month 8 and highlighted -

- (a) This report sets out the revenue monitoring position of the Council forecast to the end of the financial year 2022/23 at Period 8;
- (b) This report highlights a revised monitoring position at Month 8 (November 2022) of £3.126m over budget, which is a variance of +1.58% against the net budget;
- (c) The planned in-year savings targets amount to £11.245m, of which £8.275m are reported as on track or scheduled for delivery. Officers will continue to pursue these savings to ensure full delivery by the end of the financial year.

Cabinet noted the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 8 as set out in this report in the sum of £3.126m.

89. **Council Tax Base and Council Tax Support Scheme 2023 - 24**

Councillor Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy) introduced the Council Tax Base and Council Tax Support Scheme 2023 – 24 highlighting the following key points -

- (a) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 make arrangements for the setting of the Council Tax. The arrangements include the determination of the Council Tax Base. A Council resolution is necessary. The decision must be notified to the major precept authorities;
- (b) For the year commencing 1 April 2023, the major precept authorities would be Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority;
- (c) The Council must determine its Council Tax Base for 2023/24 during the period 1 December 2022 to 31 January 2023. The Council Tax Base is the measure of the taxable capacity of an area, to calculate an authority's Council Tax;
- (d) It represents the estimated number of Band D equivalent chargeable dwellings for the year;
- (e) It also takes into account the authority's estimated Council Tax collection rate. The level of Council Tax subsequently set must be determined using the Council Tax Base figure. The Council Tax Base calculation is attached in Appendix B;
- (f) The calculation of the Council Tax Base allows for discounts under the Council Tax Support Scheme.

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council -

1. The Council Tax Base for 2023/24 of 74,891 equivalent Band D dwellings as set out in the report;
2. The continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme and Exceptional Hardship Scheme for 2023/24 with no updates.

90. **Draft Budget Report 2023 - 24 (To Follow)**

Councillor Bingley (Leader) introduced the Draft Budget Report 2023 – 24 and highlighted the following points –

- (a) The report sets out a draft budget for 2023/24 and a proposed Council Tax rate;
- (b) The scale of the task in getting to the stage where we can recommend a draft budget should not be underestimated given the unprecedented challenges this year which were being faced by all local authorities – not least national inflation running at around 10 per cent, rising energy costs and increasing demand pressures and rising costs in social care services;
- (c) in the summer these factors led to us identifying a projected overspend of £15.5 million for this financial year and a £37.6 million shortfall in the resources needed to set a balanced budget for 2023/24;
- (d) Since then we had been working hard on a budget recovery programme to address these pressures, focusing on modernising and investing, generating income, reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of everything we do and making difficult decisions to change, pause or stop services or activities – while protecting the statutory services that we provide;
- (e) We are committed to listening to Plymouth residents as we did this and before Christmas we held a public engagement exercise to seek views on proposed measures to help close the shortfall;
- (f) pleased to say that we had around 300 responses, many of them very thoughtful and constructive;
- (g) A summary of the feedback is set out in this report;
- (h) Considered all feedback that we had received as we make decisions on the budget. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to give their feedback;
- (i) The report before us today shows progress in closing the budget gap through savings and other measures totalling £25.8 million;
- (j) This report recommended that – like most other local authorities across the country – we increase Council Tax by 2.99%, as well as levy a 2% precept to support the increase in costs and demand for looking after the elderly and social care for both adults and children;

- (k) Plymouth households are also facing rising bills and the impact of the cost of living crisis, so do not take the decision to recommend any increase lightly. However, we need to protect statutory services and protect the elderly and vulnerable in Plymouth;
- (l) We also need to remind ourselves that the increase is limited to 2.99 per cent, which compares to the inflation rate of around 10 per cent;
- (m) even with the proposed increase, we still have a gap to close before the Full Council meeting on 27 February, so work needs to continue;
- (n) We remain determined to deliver a budget that gets us through this extremely difficult financial situation and enables us to emerge as a leaner and greener council that is even more effective and efficient;
- (o) Thanked everyone involved in getting us to the stage today where we can recommend a draft budget. It was the result of a huge amount of hard work by members, officers across the council and our finance team over the last six months. We are not there yet but together we have achieved a massive amount;

Councillor Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy) highlighted the following key points -

- (a) The Council continued to manage a challenging financial environment where service demands continue to increase, the longer-term legacy impact of COVID-19 continues and where uncertain and unpredictable funding and cost levels remain;
- (b) Together with all authorities the Council was in a serious and unprecedented position due to additional national and international factors largely beyond its control, including rapidly rising energy costs, broader inflation related cost increases and demand pressures and costs in both adults' and children's social care;
- (c) The report set out an update to the Draft Budget which was presented to Cabinet in November last year;
- (d) At that time, we were presented with a budget gap to close of £11.394m. We are now showing a revised gap of £617,000;
- (e) there are several key areas to think about not least that to get to this position we all need to work together to ensure we deliver in full the £26m of savings as set out. We would of course consider the views from the public engagement and the budget scrutiny committee next week. But we need to meet this savings target;
- (f) the report is proposed a 2.99% increase in the Council Tax and a further 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept. These two measures together provided additional resources of £6.240m – not just for 2023/24 but also for future years as part of our core income;
- (g) It goes without saying, that without this increase we would be looking at a financial gap of £6.857m next year;

- (h) reminded us that the Council delivers more than 300 services – as diverse as bin collections, protecting vulnerable children, providing libraries, making planning decisions, attracting investment and jobs in the city, providing leisure facilities, providing parking, maintaining roads and pavements and looking after Plymouth's parks and green spaces;
- (i) Every part of the Council had been involved in the response to the budget situation and many employees and services would need to work in new ways. A significant amount of work continued to support the city's economy, which had been severely affected by the recent pandemic and cost of living crisis: high value jobs remained a priority. It should be noted that options were limited by the fact that the Council needed to deliver a large number of services as a statutory requirement and has limited scope to influence how these services are delivered;

Cabinet agreed to -

1. Note this report, and that it is subject to change in line with any final Settlement adjustments.
2. Agree to recommend and endorse to Full Council on the 27 February 2023 the approval of a Council Tax rise of 2.99% and ASC Precept rise of 2.00%.
3. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy, to propose final adjustments to achieve a balanced Revenue Budget.
4. Note a final Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 will be presented to the Cabinet meeting 9 February 2023, to be presented to February Full Council.