

Cabinet

Thursday 9 February 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.
Councillors Drean, Carlyle, Dr Mahony, Patel, Smith and Wakeham.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Shayer and Stoneman.

The meeting started at 2.31 pm and finished at 3.20 pm.

Also in attendance: Councillor Mary Aspinall (Vice-Chair of Budget Scrutiny Select Committee), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive), Anthony Payne (Service Director for Place), Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services), Anna Coles (Strategic Director for People), Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health), David Northey (Interim Service Director for Finance), Paul Barnard MBE (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Emma Jackman (Head of Legal Services), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), Debbie Newcombe (Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator), Jessica Colverson (Public Transport Officer), Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager) Stephen Coker (Lead Accountancy Manager), Paul Elliot (Low Carbon City Manager), Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) David Bate (Senior Civil Protection Officer) and Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor).

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.

91. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on this agenda.

92. **Minutes**

Cabinet agreed the minutes of 17 January 2023 as a correct record.

93. **Questions from the Public**

There was 1 question from members of the public-

- (1) How are the Council going to help keep down the internal costs, particularly meetings where food &/or drinks are served (hospitality), both internally and at external meetings (including Mayoral activities) paid for by the council? Many of these meetings do not require more than tea.

In response to this question, the Leader provided a response on behalf of Councillor Stoneman, as follows-

- a) “For some time, the Council has not provided food at internal meetings. Refreshments at internal meetings are in many cases (including the Corporate Management Team), paid for by personal contributions from attendees. We only offer tea and coffee at major civic events that the Lord Mayor is hosting. Savings have been made on the Lord Mayoral events in the coming year of £35,000, which includes a reduction in catering.”

94. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

95. **Leader's Announcements** (Verbal Report)

The Leader gave his announcements and highlighted –

- a) Southway Community Builders volunteers had held a successful community event, attended by the Leader;
- b) The Leader had met with Dehenna Davison (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) along with the Leaders of Torbay Council and Devon County Council with discussions on the Government's Devolution White Paper, the need for Plymouth to have a higher percentage of the share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, due to deprivation rates and school performance levels.

96. **Cabinet Member Updates** (Verbal Report)

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

- a) Delayed discharges from Derriford Hospital had improved with just 22 that week;
- b) Funding had been utilised over the Autumn and Winter period for the Health Hotel, Short-Term Treatment Centre, Venton Centre, support for discharges to Care Homes and extra short-term support to those being discharged to their own homes, following a recruitment drive for the area;
- c) Pressures on the hospital service from A&E admissions, ambulance service and calls to 111 had declined in January 2023;

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

- d) There had been over 20,000 registrations for the 2023 Garden Waste Service with the deadline for the Early Bird offer fast approaching;

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

- e) The spring collection had opened at The Box over the weekend with work underway on the summer collection.

97. **Finance Monitoring Report Month 9 (To Follow)**

The Finance Month 9 Quarterly Report was introduced by David Northey (Interim Service Director for Finance) who highlighted –

- a) The overspend had been reduced to £2.812 million from £3.1 million the previous month;
- b) To reduce the overspend to this level from £15.6 million at the start of the year was a significant achievement;
- c) There had been additional pressures within the Children's Services Directorate totalling £540,000 relating to the delivery of support for new care entrants with complex needs;
- d) The Capital Program forecast was 594 million, an ambitious program with movements detailed in the report.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

1. Note the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 9 as set out in this report in the sum of £2.812m;
2. Approves the virements as shown in Section C to Full Council;
3. Note the expenditure for the Capital Programme at Period 9 Shown in Section Do of the report.

98. **Budget Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses (To Follow)**

Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall (Vice Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee) highlighted the following during her presentation –

- a) The Scrutiny Panel thanked the Cabinet and all the officers who positively engaged in the budget scrutiny process and appreciated the prompt response from Cabinet on the recommendations;
- b) The Committee were disappointed on the lack of reference to climate impacts of decisions that needed to be taken in order to deliver the budget and a statement on climate as part of the budget report would be useful and there was an ask that future reports consider climate impact;

- c) Further details, particularly around Council Tax increases, needed to be more explicit in their impact on Equality Impact Assessments;
- d) There had been significant concerns from the Committee that there was enough funding in the budget to meet the statutory duties within the Children's Services budget, and that overspends would be minimised, as this had been a challenging budget for some years.

In response, The Leader made comments that included –

- e) His thanks to those Councillors involved in the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee; the process had been very constructive for Cabinet;
- f) The recommendations had been overwhelmingly positive and the advice had been appreciated;
- g) The points around Climate Change impact had been accepted;
- h) There was a strong view that EIA's could be strengthened and it would be looked at with reference to any Council Tax rises and he would seek further guidance from officers;
- i) He was confident that the correct tools and resources had been put in place within the context of an extremely difficult financial situation with regards to the Children's Services budget;

Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) added –

- j) Pressures had largely been driven up due to a higher than expected number of adolescents entering into the care system as well as some children with very complex needs with high cost packages;
- k) One approach to reducing the budget included work with community stakeholders and families to tackle the increase in young people presenting as homeless;
- l) A second was to work on a case by case basis to look at how children could be alternatively supported, e.g. foster care, and work with families earlier to reduce the number of care entries in the future.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

1. Respond to each of the 19 recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee as outlined within Appendix A;
2. Thank the Budget Scrutiny Select Chair and Committee for their work on scrutinising the Cabinet's proposed budget and making recommendations to Cabinet.

99. **Proposed Budget 2023 - 24 (To Follow)**

This report was introduced by The Leader highlighting the following points –

- a) The report provided an update on the progress to the final proposed balanced budget for 2023/24, set out the revenue budget planning assumptions in respect to funding proposed as well as approved saving plans and resources requirements for 2023/24;
- b) The report also summarised the cost pressures for 2023/24;

David Northey (Interim Service Director for Finance) added –

- c) There had been a gap of £617,000 presented at the January 2023 meeting of Cabinet, but with the final settlement and some business rate adjustments, it had been covered and a strong budget to go to City Council at the end of February 2023.

The Cabinet unanimously agreed –

- I. Subject to any final technical adjustments by the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet recommends to Full Council:
 - a. The Revenue Budget 2023/24 of £217.440m;
 - b. The endorsement of the use of capital receipts totalling £2.018m in line with the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy as set out in 2.16 of the report;
 - c. The Capital Budget 2023/24 of £591.540m;
 - d. The Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 which includes a proposed an adjustment to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) within 2023/24 revenue budget, as an amendment to the MRP Statement 2023/24 to release previous overpayment totalling £1m;
 - e. The Capital Financing Strategy 2023/24.

100. **Emergency Response Plan (To Follow)**

Ruth Harrell (Director for Public Health) introduced the report and highlighted –

- a) The Emergency Response Plan had been under a significant review in order to take lessons learned into consideration.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

- I. Approve the Emergency Response Plan (Version I).

101. **National Bus Strategy: Formation of Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan Refresh**

Councillor Jonathan Drear (Cabinet Member for Transport) introduced the report and highlighted –

- a) The National Bus Strategy required each Local Transport Authority to form a statutory partnership arrangements with their local bus operators and Plymouth had formed an enhanced partnership with a plan and scheme, which had been out to consultation with no objections and so it would be formed with effect from 1 April 2023;
- b) He thanked all those involved in the process and explained that comments made throughout the consultation process, would be taken into consideration;
- c) The Council had been unsuccessful in bidding for funding for bus improvement, but following feedback from the Department of Transport, the plan would be refreshed and submitted for future funding.

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) added –

- d) Appreciation for the inclusion of Violence Against Women and Girls work within the new plan.

The Leader added –

- e) Thanks to local bus operators for the difficult job they had and how well they had served Plymouth through difficult times.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

1. Approve the formation of a statutory Enhanced Partnership with the city's bus operators from 1 April 2023;
2. Approve the process of refreshing the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan by 30 June 2023;
3. To give delegated authority to the Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure, in association with the Cabinet Member for Transport, to approve the publication of the updated Bus Service Improvement Plan.

102. **Chelson Community Solar Joint Venture (To Follow)**

The Leader introduced the report –

- a) This was an exciting project for Plymouth that would have revenue, as well as environmental, benefits for Plymouth;

Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) and Paul Elliot (Low Carbon City Manager) added –

- b) The report was seeking approval from Cabinet to approve the joint venture organisation which would own, run, manage and construct the solar farm;

- c) This would be a 50/50 joint venture with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) with equal representation on the board;
- d) There would be a £3 million benefit from the joint venture over its lifetime, with the 50/50 split, this would be a £1.5 million benefit to Plymouth City Council;

In response to questions it was explained –

- e) The £3 million benefit is surplus to the costs of the project.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

1. Approve the business case to co-create and join a joint venture company (Chelson Community Solar) with Plymouth Energy Community, which would construct, own, and run the proposed Chelson Meadow solar farm;
2. Approve the appointment of Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place) and Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) as initial Directors to the joint venture company;
3. Delegate to Kim Brown (Service Director for HROD) the authority to enter into all relevant documentation and agreements in relation to the joint venture vehicle;
4. Approve the appointment of Kim Brown (Service Director HROD) to act as the shareholder representative and to exercise all voting rights on behalf of the Council as member of the company subject to Key Decisions (as defined by the Council's Constitution) being reserved to the Leader/ Cabinet) and take any necessary action to protect, safeguard and effectively manage the Council's interest in the Local Authority Trading Company.

103. **Family hubs contract award/Children's Centre delivery plan**

The report was introduced by Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People) and highlighted –

- a) Government had announced that Plymouth's sign up to the Start for Life and Family Hubs Program as 1 of 75 local authorities to receive funding to drive forward the development of family hubs over the following two years;
- b) The delivery of services would be focused on helping families with children in the first 1001 days of their life through parenting programs, pre-natal mental health, infant feeding and the home learning environment to ensure children were ready to start school;
- c) There was a commitment to transform the early help offer in Plymouth, through the creation of family hubs, for families to ensure children were given the best possible start in life;

- d) The first of the hubs would open in Summer 2023 offering a range of services and with a number of community links;

Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager) added –

- e) The team would be working with existing Children's Centres, as well as looking at other Council buildings to ensure they meet the best needs of families for Family Hub sites;
- f) Co-location of services would be looked at to make it as easy as possible for families to seek help and support;

In response to questions it was added –

- g) There was a plan beyond Phase III to fill the gaps across the city that didn't have such easy access to the new hubs, but the map included only showed existing Children's Centres and not other buildings that could be used such as Libraries;
- h) It was important to understand how communities feel about existing buildings and existing stigmas that might present a barrier to access to services.

The following recommendations were made in order to ensure the sustainability of services for families in Plymouth and supporting the strategic direction of travel into developing Family Hubs. They were also intended to maximise the benefits of grant funding and ensure Value for Money in the delivery of services.

The Cabinet agreed unanimously to –

1. Agree new contracts were awarded to LARK, Action for Children and Barnardo's to support the conversion of Children's Centres into Family Hubs between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2025 (The existing contracts were due to expire at the end of March 2023);
2. A statutory consultation to be undertaken to consider the change of use of seven Children's Centre sites;
3. The reduction in service budgets would be mitigated by a shift in service delivery to focus on conversion to Family Hubs and delivery of grant funded activity.