

Cabinet

Monday 16 October 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

Councillors Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Haydon and Lowry.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Penberthy.

Also in attendance: Chris Avent (Green Estate Manager) (Virtual), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning), Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning), David Haley (Director of Children's Services) (Virtual), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk, Laura Lawrence (Commissioning Assistant), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) David Northey (Interim Section 151 Officer), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), James Stannard (Care Home Business Improvement Partner) and Gary Walbridge (Interim Director for People).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.35 pm.

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.

47. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

48. **Minutes**

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 as a correct record.

49. **Questions from the Public**

There were three questions from members of the public:

The following question was received from Mr Stephen Dart and answered by The Leader:

Question: On 11 Sep 23 PCC confirmed that of the £2.75 million capital funding agreed by the Cabinet for the Brickfields redevelopment “only around 20% of the funding approved will be paid as grant funding to Plymouth Argyle ...” Please confirm what the

Answer: Thanks to Mr Dart for his follow-up question. The redevelopment of the Brickfields site really is a once in a generation opportunity to secure significant investment in sport, health and wellbeing services that will benefit not just the people of Devonport but residents all

remaining 80% is being spent on?

across the city and indeed visitors from outside Plymouth as well.

Mr Dart's question asks about the funding which the Council is providing. Before I explain how we're spending our funding it's worth highlighting that the Council's commitment to provide £2.75m has helped to secure over £18m of funding from our partners at Plymouth Argyle Football Club and Plymouth Argyle Community Trust. Together with Plymouth Albion and Devonport Community Leisure Ltd (who will be the voice of the local community) we will be creating a new home for elite and grassroots sport, and new health and wellbeing facilities that will be the envy of other towns and cities in the southwest.

Apart from the funding which we are providing to Plymouth Argyle to support the work they will be doing at Brickfields, the Council funding will also be used for the following.

- We'll be providing a brand new hockey pitch at Stoke Damerel Community College to replace the current pitch which is worn out and has been out of use for some time.
- We'll also be providing the petanque club with a new home at Stonehouse Creek. This will give them a new playing facility with dedicated parking and access to changing facilities and toilets.
- We'll also be carrying out improvements to the existing stand at the athletics track.
- And we've made provision for ongoing maintenance of the athletics track.
- We're also supporting Devonport Community Leisure Trust in their new role as chair of the Brickfields governing board and with their ongoing work with the local community.

The following question was received from Mr Black:

Question: How does the Leader intend to improve connectivity to Plymouth, does this include the additional railway line through North Devon / Tavistock and extending the M5 to Plymouth?

Answer: The Council remains committed to improving connectivity to Plymouth as set out in Policy SPT8 of the South West Devon Joint Local Plan which includes supporting the ongoing investment that enhances the resilience of the rail network to extreme weather events and delivers improvements to capacity, frequency and journey times.

After nearly 10 years since storms washed away a section of track at Dawlish, there is still no firm commitment from Government to complete all 5 phases of work needed to make the coastal route resilient. Even the announcement by the Prime Minister that the promised investment that the south west would get from cancelling HS2, were only illustrative and not meant as pledges. Plymouth deserves firm concrete proposals not just illustrations with a commitment to funding of all five phases of the work and the Council will continue to campaign for this until this is achieved.

Similarly, the Council support any measures that would lead to the re-opening of the Northern Route between Plymouth and Exeter via Tavistock and Okehampton. The Council is therefore currently working in partnership with stakeholders to achieve the next stage of that ambition by securing the reopening of the rail line to allow journeys once again between Plymouth and Tavistock.

There are no proposals to extend the M5 west of Exeter, but The Council will continue to make the case, through its membership of the Peninsula Transport Sub-National Transport Body, for investment in the Strategic Road Network, ensuring that the A38 is modernised to improve safety and journey time reliability to meet the needs of users.

David Cameron said when the line went down (at Dawlish) that the Government would do whatever it took to make it

	resilient, which they had not done and we were still some way from resilience of the Penzance to Paddington.
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The following question was received from George Wheeler:

Question: Would you provide the following information about all the public toilets owned and operated by the city council in Plymouth, the location, the capacity, and the charge to use the facility, please?

Answer: Please see a list below of each facility. The older toilets consist of blocks with cubicles in the female block and cubicles and urinals in the male blocks. We have estimated the capacity of the multi-use urinals for the purpose of this report.

Public Toilets managed by Plymouth City Council		
Site	Facilities	Chargeable
Alexandra Road Public Conveniences	One gender neutral accessible toilet	50p
Hoe Promenade Public Conveniences	Eight gender neutral toilets, one accessible toilet and a changing places facility.	50p
Devils Point Public Conveniences	Two gender neutral and one accessible toilet with baby changing and one shower	50p
Elphinstone, Phoenix Wharf Public Conveniences	One accessible toilet with baby changing facilities and four gender neutral toilets with baby changing facilities.	50p
Mount Batten Public Conveniences	One accessible toilet, one male block with max capacity of 7, one female block with 5 cubicles and separate baby changing facility.	No
Quay Point, Barbican Public Conveniences	One accessible toilet with baby changing facilities and six gender neutral toilets with baby changing facilities	50p
Southway Drive Public Conveniences	One Accessible toilet, and two gender neutral toilets	No
West Hoe Public Conveniences	8 gender neutral toilets all with baby changing facilities. Two accessible toilets	50p
Armada Way Public Conveniences	Underground facility with Male and Female provision. Both have maximum capacity of 12 people.	50p
Armada Way, Accessible Toilet	Three accessible toilets (two include baby changing facilities)	50p
Central Park café Public Conveniences	Three gender neutral toilets located next to café	No

50. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

51. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- a) The £22 million round two bid for the National Marine Park had been submitted to the Heritage Fund and a date had been scheduled for mid-November for trustees of the National Lottery to visit the projects, with the proposal due to go before the National Lottery Board in December;
- b) Cruise Ships and visiting ships in the sound had increased, Destination Plymouth were promoting Plymouth as a destination for shipping, and the council were supporting Cattewater Harbour Commissioners in looking into feasibility to undertake further expansion as part of the shared prosperity funding along within the first ever port strategy;
- c) With regards to Celtic Array, there was an opportunity for Plymouth in relation to servicing of Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) platforms planned for the Celtic Sea and since September Plymouth had hosted a number of potential visitors looking to use Plymouth's facilities; the first ever FLOW conference would be opening at The Box later in October to showcase the opportunities to businesses and also working with the Freeport and ABP nationally;
- d) The council had been supporting the fishing industry whilst EA and SHH undertook works on the Lock Gates and access to the harbour was restricted and the EA and SHH had been asked that compensation arrangements were clearly communicated to the industry as a matter of urgency;
- e) Business cases had been approved for industrial developments in the Freeport at Langage, a new hotel development on Embankment Road and the first EV charging station at Outland Road, with the Economic Development team working on £1 billion worth of development projects;
- f) He had visited the Barden Company in early October, a key company in Plymouth.

52. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) provided the following updates:

- a) Social media posts had been shared on mental health support, community food access map (helping people to find their local food bank), debt advice (directing residents to face to face services and also online support), healthy starts, and promoting social broadband and phone tariffs for people on benefits;
- b) Newer leaflets which were more family focused which had been distributed via community midwives, libraries and DWP;
- c) There had also been promotion of things to do with welcoming warm spaces throughout the winter, advising what residents could do to reduce their energy costs and free activities during half term;
- d) Household Support Fund Awareness Week, given £4.5m to use across the city to help people and more than £1.7m of this had been used to provide food vouchers for

families who had children who were eligible for free school meals;

- e) Working with Citizen's Advice to distribute £750k of food and fuel vouchers and essential household goods to vulnerable people in need;
- f) There was a sport and Leisure conference at the life centre which hosted Active Devon and showed Sport England and Active Thrive how we have linked sport with active aging, promoting a thriving lifestyle;
- g) Rhys Jones from Plymouth Active Leisure went to London to Swim England conference and promoted how much Plymouth used swimming to improve mental health.
- h) She had written to Government to ask for a social tariff for energy to help struggling households;
- i) Shared information with Councillors and staff about cyber security;
- j) Planning permission had been granted for a Community Hub for Brickfields;
- k) Sports Development Unit co-ordinated 84 holiday clubs providing 23,950 free spaces for benefit related free school meals children aged between 5-16 years.

Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) provided the following update:

- l) Rolled out new Climate Impact Assessment tool to ensure that all key decisions consider their climate related impacts including biodiversity, Green House Gas emissions, renewable energy, ocean and waterway health, air quality, materials and waste, climate change adaptations and education, engagement and enabling conditions;
- m) Gordon Miller Award won for Plymouth Natural Grid Partnership project;
- n) 5 people involved in kick-starter programmes went to work in a green space management sector, one for PCC and two working for The National Trust.

Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) provided the following update:

- o) A resuscitation unit had been agreed to be put in the Guildhall;
- p) She visited the Clinical Diagnostic Centre and had positive feedback around not having to wait for Derriford, [a video was played at this point to demonstrate this.](#)

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) provided the following updates:

- q) Planning application had been completed and had been scheduled for submission before Christmas for the work to start in Spring for £25m development in Colin

Campbell Court;

- r) Old Town Street and New George Street development outside House of Fraser had been scheduled to be completed before Christmas and the contract for the next phase has been issued;
- s) Stonework restored in the bow-tie pattern in the Civic Square, the paving around the pond had been re-laid, new turf had been put down and new soil with nutrition in had been laid for the trees, the pond had been agreed to be refilled this week;
- t) Urban Splash have signed a service agreement to undertake structural work on the Civic Centre; it had been agreed that the cladding and roof replacement would start at the end of this year and would be forecast to be completed in Autumn 2024;
- u) Agreed undertaking works inside the building including 144 new apartments and 50,000 square feet of commercial space.

Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) provided the following updates:

- v) Had been awarded £1.6m from Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan for a two year period;
- w) Seasonal bus to Bovisand return confirmed.

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) gave the following updates:

- x) Confirmation of Bonfire night on Plymouth Hoe 5 November 2023 with sponsorship from Plymouth Waterfront Partnership;
- y) Autumn show opened in The Box including the Dutch Flower Exhibition and the End of Empire Exhibition;
- z) Attended the switch on of Love is the Highest Economy of Life installation at the Civic Centre;
- aa) Rosemarie Corlett had been announced as the new Plymouth Laureate 2023-25.

53. **Corporate Plan Performance Quarter One - Transitional Report**

In Councillor Chris Penberthy's absence, Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The following priorities had been added to the corporate plan: working with police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; fewer potholes, cleaner, greener streets and transport; building more homes; green investment and working with the NHS to provide better access to health, care and dentistry;

- b) The Corporate Plan for quarter one (April, May, June 2023) had covered two administrations;
- c) The Corporate Plan had been changed to include 51 indicators to measure the Council's performance and included an additional 10 indicators that were a consequence of the previous administration;
- d) Number of early antisocial behaviour interventions have increased by more than 50% from the previous quarter and there has also been a marginal decrease in the number of children with repeat child protections plans;
- e) Homelessness had risen significantly and the ability to deal with this had been shown in the performance report, this would be a key priority to provide people with a home.

Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) added:

- a) New indicators had been added around safeguarding priorities, focused on vulnerable adults and young people but had been expanded to include health and safety of the public.

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) then added:

- a) The dental task force had been set up, as 22,000 people were on the waiting list for dentistry and members of parliament would attend the meetings;

The Cabinet agreed to note the Corporate Plan Performance Quarter One – Transitional Report.

54. **SEND Report and SEND Action Plan**

Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) Plymouth had a local area SEND inspection lead by OFSTED and CQC in late June 2023, the outcome of the inspection was that there was serious weakness identified, with 5 priority areas that needed to be addressed through a local area action plan, the inspection endorsed the council's long term plans and directions of travel for the local area partnership and multi-agency work and areas of positive work were recognised in the report;
- b) Concerns were raised about the provisional outcome for children with SEND including those who need multi-agency report and those most vulnerable;
- c) A meeting between Plymouth City Council and NHS Senior Officers was held on 11 September 2023 and the progress made was noted, including putting forward that an externally chaired board was required;
- d) A draft notice had been received from Secretary of State;

- e) A stakeholder event, including colleagues from schools, children's services, the Education Psychology Service and the health services had been held on 20 September 2023;
- f) A crucial aspect in the plan was the involvement of school and college leaders including head teachers and CEOs to be involved with key governance and working groups;
- g) There had been some positive feedback on the plan from the DFE but the department were awaiting feedback from OFSTED before finalising the plan, and then an executive decision would have to be made;
- h) The plan consisted of the following: Quickly identifying young people who are vulnerable and risk negative outcomes; reducing likelihood of pupils with educational healthcare plans (EHCP) being excluded from school; addressing long waiting times for children and young people who need support from health services; ensuring that children and young people with SEND who also have social care needs receive the care and support that they need; improving the consistency of support offered to children and young people in schools and settings; providing all practitioners across social care, health, schools and settings with the training they need to provide consistent education, care and support;
- i) The priority was that children and young people in Plymouth would be supported to grow up well, to achieve and to thrive;
- j) She was committed to making improvements and rebuilding trust in services as swiftly as possible.

David Haley (Director of Children's Services) added:

- k) Awaiting OFSTED's approval for the report and after that would move forward to make the executive decision for approval and publish the action plan within the time scale that is set out.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Note the verbal report;
2. Receive an update at the next Cabinet meeting.

55. **Re-commissioning of Adult Care Homes**

Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the following item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Existing contracts for the 89 care homes for adults in Plymouth were due to expire on 31 December 2023;
- b) Before contracts were put in place, it was important to make sure there was the right type of provision locally that would meet the future needs of citizens, taking into account the fair cost of care and the need for homes that could support adults

with dementia;

- c) The proposal was to extend the existing contracts for 12 months, which would allow commissioners to continue working closely with providers and those who live in care homes to engage, listen and use this information to build out plans for the future;
- d) The teams would work closely with health partners, including NHS Devon ICB, University Hospitals Plymouth and Livewell Southwest to make sure they were all working as a system around some of the most vulnerable citizens in Plymouth.

Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning) added:

- e) It was recognised that care home providers hadn't had to take part in any kind of procurement process before and the team would need to make sure they worked with them to guide them through the process;
- f) Significant changes needed to be made to the types and numbers of care homes beds that were commissioned for the local authority and health clients;

In response to questions, it was further explained:

- g) There were issues around sustainability of skills and it was important that staff felt confident to care for the elderly residents and young residents in all circumstances;
- h) Work force development, capacity building and working with skills providers would all be key elements of the plan.
- i) Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) then added:
- j) It would ensure the council got the best from the market for everyone in care in Plymouth.

The Cabinet agreed to:

- I. Approve the business case to extend the current care home contract over a period of 1 year from the beginning of January 2024.

56. **Habitat Banking Vehicle Business Case**

Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) State of Nature was the most comprehensive report on UK biodiversity published by leading conservation charities and it had painted a stark picture and had found that in the UK 151 documented animal species had already become extinct and nearly 1 in 6 of remaining species were threatened with extinction;
- b) Nature recovery needed to be at the centre of what council did and this would be assisted by the Climate Impact Assessment Tool which would assess and mitigate the

impact of decisions;

- c) The 2021 Environment Act (2021) required developers from January 2024, to show a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%, with a 30-year maintenance period;
- d) The Habitat Banking Vehicle concept was a way of ensuring that when on-site improvements weren't sufficient, the council could assist developers in funnelling investment into the enhancement of nature in Plymouth's green spaces;
- e) Ocean City Nature, the collect of companies that would run the vehicle, had already been set up and the business case asked for approval for £500,000 investment as a loan in the ambitious pilot;
- f) The pilot would enhance nature on three council green-sites in a measurable way with DEFRA metrics;
- g) The improvements would be theoretically split into 'biodiversity units' which would be tradable tokens that could be sold to developers who would need to show they had developed a certain level of biodiversity net gain;
- h) It is hoped that this UK-leading pilot would show the viability of the habitat banking vehicle model as an effective means of channelling millions of pounds of funding into local green spaces;
- i) The habitat banking vehicle had the potential to be the best opportunity for the council to give nature recovery in Plymouth the support it needed.

Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) added:

- j) The Habitat Banking Vehicle was a local solution for delivery against biodiversity net gain policy, maximising benefits for local nature and local people;
- k) Wanted to ensure, like with Section 106 monies, that the impacts of development were mitigated locally;
- l) Further explained the process of funding and biodiversity units as a circular system;
- m) The three pilot sites would be Cann Woods, Ham Woods and Chelson Meadow, all in different areas of the city and incorporating different habitat types;
- n) By having the habitat banking vehicle in place, there would be no delays in developments due to the new requirements;
- o) The financial modelling had taken inflation into account;
- p) Doing nothing would result in a loss in money for nature in the city because Section 106 would no longer exist, and the plans would benefit nature and keep people close to nature as well.

In response to questions, it was further explained;

- q) Benefits would vary from site to site and so types of planting would vary, but would encourage more animal life to thrive in the city;
- r) Increases in biodiversity would be measured against DEFRA's metrics;
- s) Despite recent changes in attitude towards net zero from national Government, the plans were still due to go ahead, it had been previously delayed, but this was in relation to not being ready for implementation;
- t) The team would be looking for involvement and engagement from local communities as the aim was to improve these areas for their benefit and welcomed the suggestion of involvement with schools;
- u) It built on important work already being undertaken in the city, and it was innovative, with other local authorities looking to Plymouth on this.

Chris Avent (Green Estate Manager) added:

- v) It was a new and innovative way of gaining funds to support wider work across the city.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the business case and approve £0.5m loan to Ocean City Biodiversity for the delivery of the Habitat enhancement activities across the 3 pilot sites and operation of the company;
2. Confirmed that the appointed PCC Member Rep, David Northey, as Interim Strategic Director for Finance, would be responsible for implementing the loan agreement at a suitable point in time, and for reviewing and monitoring the repayments from OCB to PCC.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) asked for information on both this project, and dentistry action group, to submit as entries to the LGA Labour Groups list of 100 Innovations of Labour Councils.