

Cabinet

Monday 13 November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Dann, Vice Chair (for this meeting).

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Laing

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.20 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.

57. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

58. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

59. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

60. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chairs urgent business.

61. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- a) The Council, Plymouth University and Freeport led a successful bid to become one of Innovate UK's national innovation launch pads, covering Digital Health, Net Zero, Agri-tech, Food and Maritime and Marine;
- b) Working with Plymouth University, the Economic Development team organised the city's first ever Offshore Floating Wind Conference which helped build on the work done to develop the first ever Port Strategy;
- c) A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed with Brittany Ferries and Associated British Ports which would see Millbay become a Net Zero port by

2030;

- d) National Lottery Trustees investigation had reached its final stage and would go to the Board in December for decision, funding a £22 million project to transform the Mount Batten Centre and Peninsula, Tinside, Mount Edgumbe, Firestone Bay and Ernesettle Creek;
- e) A Marine Engagement Programme would start in January including, a large schools programme, multiple community-based programmes, major nature boost projects, heritage interpretation and a large digital project;
- f) Plymouth would be hosting the UK's largest outdoor promoter, Live Nation, on the Hoe;
- g) 25,000 people attended Bonfire Night celebrations on Plymouth Hoe, which had been brought back as part of the cost of living action plan;
- h) The Box had had 660,000 visitors since its opening, and over half-term there were 11,000 visitors, which was a 20% increase from 2022;
- i) A film by British Artist, John Akomfrah would be launched on 29 November 2023;
- j) Richard Pyshorn gave a presentation at the Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee about the inspirational work being done with veterans;

A video was presented regarding the [Armada Way consultation](#)

62. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria) provided the following update:

- a) Libraries would start to sell a small selection of stationary items including pens, envelopes, bulldog clips and document holders and the additional income would be used for the library service;
- b) 'Donate a Coat' programme would be added to the library service in which the public would donate a coat to someone in need, coat racks with the donated articles would be shown at the Central Library and Plympton, Plymstock, St Budeaux and Southway libraries with a book and a Christmas Card in the pocket for vulnerable people to take;
- c) The library service would also be offering 11 spaces across the city for keeping people warm and to alleviate loneliness;
- d) 16 Days of Activism for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) would start on 25th November, starting with the Orange Plymouth Peace Walk;

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

- e) £21 million would be invested into the Brickfields sports site with three planning applications submitted, one for Brickfields, one for the hockey pitch at Stoke Damerel and one for Petanque;
- f) 2500 people had still accessed the cost of living hub over the past four weeks proving the need for welcoming spaces;
- g) Talk Money week took place to encourage people to access financial help rather than struggling;
- h) Warm Spaces Programme had started and encouraged smaller places to apply to the Household Support fund to access funding which would help open community spaces for people to go and keep warm;
- i) Third Food Club had been opened, where the public would pay a small amount to be a member to access good quality food at a more reasonable price and the Public could receive lessons in food and how to manage a budget;
- j) Plymouth Active Leisure came second for the Best Marketing Campaign category at the UK Active Awards;
- k) The Fit and Fed programme offered 1,966 family swims at the Life Centre during October half term;
- l) The Life Centre offered numerous events including youth climbing series, swim leagues, a Plymouth Raider's basketball match and a boxing event at the sports hall.

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

- m) Adult Safeguarding Awareness week would take place 20 – 24 November 2023 and would include the following: partnership representatives spending time in the City's health and wellbeing hubs, raising awareness of people's experiences and signposting;
- n) A video would be posted highlighting safeguarding issues that adults may face and how help and support could be provided, focusing on abuse, neglect, wellbeing, homelessness, and promoting the message: 'Everyone had the right to live their lives free from violence, fear and abuse'.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) provided the following update:

- o) Plymouth City Council's Cabinet Advisory Group on Child Poverty would look at longer term solutions to the Cost of Living Crisis and how they would be

integrated into long term work on tackling poverty within the city;

- p) Ten years ago Plymouth was awarded status as a Social Enterprise City, being the first Social Enterprise City in the UK and had recently received positive feedback about how supportive the Council and Administration had been regarding Social Enterprise in Plymouth;
- q) Special thanks was given to The Rank Foundation for investing £5.75 million in Social Enterprise development in the city over the past seven years;
- r) Meetings held with the private rented sector had been replaced with meetings with Southwest Landlords Association, focusing on issues such as damp and mould, pest control in houses of multiple occupancy (HMO), and dealing with anti-social behaviour;
- s) It was agreed that over a period of 15 months the Southwest Landlords Association would be carrying a substantial number of articles from Plymouth City Council in their newsletter;
- t) Literature regarding legislative changes had been distributed to landlords to ensure they were up to date prior to license renewal;
- u) Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were too low to meet the cost of renting in Plymouth, which meant there were no properties to let at the LHA rate and so more people had approached the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- v) A Housing Taskforce had been set up with a recovery plan to try and bring impetus from across the Council into providing solutions into the crisis, meaning there had been reduced numbers of households in Bed and Breakfasts;
- w) The Council had worked with Plymouth Alliance to support them by providing loans to enable them to take on more accommodation to help those most vulnerable, including a loan to both Plymouth Access to Housing and Young Devon to support an additional 20 units of accommodation;
- x) A bid for additional money had been submitted through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme that would see approximately 80 additional unit of accommodation brought online.

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

- y) A consultation drop-in session would take place at the Guildhall on 22 November 2023 from 12pm to 7pm and would be open to all in the local community to hear questions and views on the proposed development of the Community Diagnostic Centre at Colin Campbell Court.

63. **LGA Update**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The Local Government Association (LGA) had promoted a smoke free society, highlighting issues around vaping and the litter that had come from it, as well as the public health issues that had arisen.
- b) Pressures in Children's Social Care had been felt through Council's nationally as costs had increased by 13.5% across the country;
- c) LGA members reported a 20% increase in Council budgets to support homelessness;
- d) The LGA had said the Government needed to expand the list of accepted ID documents to remove barriers to voting as the ID changes at the prior election caused disadvantages to certain groups of people.

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) added:

- e) Professor Whitty (Medical Officer of Great Britain) had confirmed money would be made available to support the vaping issues.

64. **Finance and Capital Monitoring Report Month 6**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) There was a net forecast overspend for quarter two of £4.766 million which had decreased from £7.5 million in quarter one;
- b) Children's Services projected overspend was £6.138 million which equated to an additional cost close to 10% of the budget and was not sustainable;
- c) David Northey (Interim Section 151 Officer) had worked closely with the Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) who had chaired the Children's Services Transition Board to ensure children would get the care they required alongside ensuring the council's finances would remain robust;
- d) Adult Social Care had an overspend of £3.7 million which hadn't increased since quarter one;
- e) There had been a significant increase of £1.5 million in home to school SEND public transport;
- f) Homelessness had a projected an overspend of £2.423 million pounds since the beginning of the 2023-24 financial year;
- g) £5.86 million of budget savings had been identified corporately which helped to offset the pressure which came from specific areas of the council;
- h) The original saving targets within budget were £23 million and from period seven the projected forecast for savings were for £19 million, the remaining £4 million

to be saved would hopefully be achieved in the coming months;

- i) The Capital Forecast Budget for 2023-28 had increased from £5.57 million to £6.29 million for the five year period;
- j) The Capital programme had a substantial increase to include £1.3 million for Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Terminal Development, £2.98 million for Tinside pool, the National Marine Park and other Marine projects, and a further £8.64 million for the Freeport.

David Northey (Interim Section 151 Officer) added:

- k) The Capital section of the report would go forward to Council at the next meeting on 20 November 2023.

Cabinet agreed to –

- 1. Note the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 6 as set out in this report in the sum of £4.766m;
- 2. Note the Capital Budget 2023-2028 is revised to £629.924m as shown in Table I and agreed to recommend these amendments to Full Council for approval.

65. **Draft Budget 2024 - 25**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) National inflation, energy costs, increased demands, rising social care costs, homelessness had all continued to increase and therefore had a significant impact on setting the budget;
- b) Additional allowance had been made in the budget to ensure there was adequate funding to repair potholes and keep the roads safe;
- c) Additional funding had also been allocated to grass cutting due to the significant number of complaints received;
- d) The council would have a shortfall of £2.358 million of funding in 2024-25 which would need to be closed;
- e) The Commitments made in the Labour Council Manifesto (less potholes, streets would be cleaner and greener, increase greener transportation, build more homes and invest in the green infrastructure) had been set out in the budget:
- f) Next steps would include public engagement with businesses and the community to ask for their views and opinions on the budget. The budget would follow the scrutiny process for further consideration on 6 and 7 December 2023;

- g) After those steps had been taken, Cabinet would consider a further report in January and February 2023, which would then go to the Full Council on 26 February 2024.

Cabinet agreed to note the report and acknowledged that the report would be subject to change in line with any Government Autumn Statement, Provisional Settlement adjustments and changes required as proposals are developed.

66. **Renewal of Armed Forces Covenant**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) Plymouth had the second highest veteran population of all local authorities in the Country;
- b) The first Community Covenant was signed in 2012 which saw the appointment of the Council's first Armed Forces and Veteran's Champion;
- c) The Council achieved Silver Recognition in the Employment Recognition Scheme;
- d) New legislation changed the Covenant from voluntary to an organisational commitment, and this had changed the way covenants looked throughout the country, and since this had been changed the Council had received Gold Employment Recognition Status;
- e) The proposal for the new Covenant would go beyond legislative requirements and as an organisation; the council had already gone beyond the legislative requirements.

Councillor Murphy (Armed Forces and Veterans Champion) added:

- f) The Armed Forces Covenant was a commitment from the nation to those who serve, or have served in the British Military and to their families. By signing, the council committed to acknowledge and understand those who serve, or have served, in the armed forces, and their families, would be treated with respect and fairness in all of the services the Council offered, and the unique and selfless sacrifice associated with service would be recognised;
- g) Emphasis was put on supporting young people with their mental health due to the conditions their parents would work in, and the accommodation provided not being adequate;
- h) The new Covenant would outline a criteria that all businesses who had signed would offer a guaranteed interview for spouses of military personnel;
- i) Over 70 businesses had signed the Covenant;
- j) The Navy would become more involved in the new Covenant.

Cabinet asked that Officer's correct an error in the document to remove reference to "Her Majesty's" and replace with "His Majesty's".

Cabinet agreed the renewal of the Armed Forces Covenant by Plymouth City Council subject to the above amendment being made.

67. **Violence Against Women and Girls Update**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria) introduced the item and provided the following update:

- a) The Violence Against Women and Girls Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action plan was signed off by Safer Plymouth and would be launched on 7 December 2023;
- b) One of the main actions of the strategy would be to be the first area in the UK to achieve a Coordinated Community Response Accreditation which would be pioneered by the charity, Standing Together;
- c) The council had recommissioned the Domestic Abuse and Refuge service which would help provide safe accommodation and community support for individuals and families in the Plymouth area;
- d) A Healthy Relationship Alliance had been introduced which would increase education for young people;
- e) E-learning and Workforce Development training would be launched alongside a refreshed Domestic Abuse Policy for the Council.

Councillor Reilly added:

- f) The 16 days of Activism against Gender-based Violence would take place 25 November – 10 December and would include Turning Plymouth Orange, an art installation by Trevi and a youth conference with VAWG at its focus;
- g) Large organisations such as Babcock helped facilitate connections to Trevi and First Light which promoted awareness of resources;
- h) MAN Culture held a conference in September and had conversations about the attitudes of men with respect to VAWG.

In response to questions, supported by Meghan Field (VAWG Strategic Lead), it was explained:

- i) 'Plymouth says enough to Violence Against Women and Girls, Plymouth says enough to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' was the agreed message for the 16 days of Activism campaign;

- j) The Enough Campaign would have a QR code where the public would access relevant information and the council would be able to track the data regarding how many people accessed the information;
- k) Interviews and surveys would take place with people with lived experiences, which would gauge the effect of 16 days of Activism and the Enough Campaign in three to six months.

Cabinet thanked Councillor Reilly and Officer's for the update.