

Cabinet

Monday 11 December 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Dann, Vice Chair for this meeting.

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Laing (Online but did not vote), Matt Garrett (Service Director), David Haley (Director of Children’s Services), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health), Laura Juett (Public Health Specialist), Jackie Kings (Community Connections Strategic Manager) , Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Robert Nelder (Consultant for Public Health), Tracey Naismith (Community Connections Strategic Manager), David Northey (Interim Service Director for Finance), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place) and Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.50 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.

68. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

69. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

70. **Questions from the Public**

The following question was submitted by Stephen Dart	
Question: PCC confirmed (23/10/23) that it’s funding of Brickfields pays for “carrying out improvements to the existing stand and ongoing maintenance ... at the athletics track.” PCC states funding is from maintenance savings due to partners taking on these costs - why are PCC funding such improvements / maintenance?	Response: 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 across the city and indeed visitors from outside Plymouth as well. Mr Dart’s question asks about the funding which the Council is providing towards some improvements to the athletics track and ongoing maintenance

	<p>of that facility.</p> <p>Before I answer that specific question 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.</p> <p>The funding which is being spent on the athletics track is really important. The track at Brickfields is used regularly by the City of Plymouth Athletics Club, the University of Plymouth's Athletics Club, a number of local schools and other clubs and by the Ministry of Defence. The track therefore provides opportunities for hundreds of people every year to keep fit and get into sport. And that's what this project is all about – as well as providing new facilities for elite-level football and rugby, this project is all about supporting grass roots sport and giving local people opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing.</p>
The following question was submitted by Alderman George Wheeler	
<p>Question: You advised me last June that work on the St Budeaux Interchange project was scheduled to commence from September 2023. In a recent bulletin, Mr. Mercer MP wrote that Mr. Payne had told him it would start in January. Is this correct and if not, when will it commence, please?</p>	<p>Response: In June 2023 the timescale advised for commencement by the project team for the St Budeaux Interchange Transforming Cities Fund project was for commencement in September 2023. I am now advised by the project team that the project will now commence in February 2024. The context for delivering all projects at this time are extremely challenging due to wider macro-economic circumstances, contract price inflation, materials supply issues and labour constraints. In the intervening time further work has been undertaken by the project team to</p>

	make a few adjustments to the programme to minimise potential traffic disruptions for taxi and bus users. In addition, the scheme had to also secure re-approval for the project through the Department of Transport's Change Control process before the project programme could be finalised.
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71. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chairs urgent business.

72. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- a) Businesses had responded well to the Resurgam Programme which led to employment rates increasing from 110,000 employees in 2020 to 116,000 employees in 2023;
- b) There had been a 27% increase in businesses in Plymouth, with 6,300 businesses operating in 2023;
- c) Decisions that had been made since May 2023 included:
 - i. £20 million forward funding deal for Derriford district centre;
 - ii. £14 million forward funding deal for a new hotel on Embankment Road;
 - iii. £22 million investment in Millbay Port improvements that would take place in January 2023;
 - iv. A business case for a further phase of Ocean's Gate that would deliver 1,779 square metres of business space and would create nearly 50 jobs;
 - v. A business case for £9.1 million investment at Langage Farm Business Park which would deliver 5,600 square metres in the Freeport;
 - vi. A £26 million bid was submitted for funding for the National Marine Park, and a response would be expected in January regarding it's success;
 - vii. First EV charging station had been installed;
- d) Work had begun on two long-term programmes: City Centre Housing and Defence Spending.

73. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) provided the following update:

- a) In the June 2023 OFTED and CQC-led SEND inspection, key areas of focus involved enhancing collaboration among school and college leaders for sharing information, enabling earlier identification of children at risk of increased vulnerability and negative outcomes, and reducing the likelihood of expelling pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- b) Strong partnership working with the Integrated Care Board, University Hospitals Plymouth, and Livewell colleagues facilitated the initiation of the Local Area SEND Action Plan, increasing capacity for Autistic Spectrum Condition assessments and thereby reducing waiting times;
- c) Multi-disciplinary locality work in Family Hubs had initially focused on 0-5 outcomes which involved partners working together to ensure families avoid telling their story twice;
- d) The Education Team opened the first City Attendance Conference at City College in November 2023 where the key theme was 'belonging';
- e) The second Skills Summit took place at the New Continental Hotel in November 2023 and focused on the creation of new and innovative placements;
- f) The Skills Launchpad supported nearly 700 young people with personalised action plans, resulting in a 74% success rate in transitioning them into employment;
- g) The number of supported internships within Plymouth had grown from nine to 44 within the past 12 months and a further 20 places would be planned for early 2024;
- h) A SENCo conference would take place in January 2024.

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

- i) The Council had agreed to bid for the Department for Transport's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area scheme (ZEBRA 2), proposing a multi-million pound investment to introduce 50 zero-emission electric double-decker buses and the required charging infrastructure.

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

- j) Plymouth Active Leisure had partnered up with City College Plymouth to aid students with work placements and opportunities;
- k) Nearly 2000 people had accessed the cost of living hub in the past 4 weeks;

- l) Communication messages would go out in the run up to Christmas including, how to manage your finances and how to avoid loan sharks as well as free things to do as a community.

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

- m) The government had allocated a £4.5 million Household Support Fund, with £1.7 million utilised for school holiday food vouchers, £750,000 provided through Citizen's Advice Plymouth grants for essential needs, and additional financial aid distributed via Plymouth Energy Community to alleviate fuels bills;
- n) Plymouth City Council, in partnership with Brighton Council and the LGA, co-signed a letter and provided case studies of the positive impact the Household Support Fund had to the government, aiming to prevent funding cuts post-March 2024;
- o) The coastal path at Mount Batten had been fixed; using 175 tonnes of concrete to ensure the path is secure.

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

- p) A letter had been sent to Robbie Moore MP regarding the funding formula for New Burdens Funding;
- q) A recycling engagement campaign would be launched in the lead up to Christmas 2023;
- r) Plymouth City Council received £50,000 to deliver up to six micro-forests from the King's Coronation Living Heritage Fund;
- s) Plymouth City Council won the Sustainable Infrastructure Grand Prize and the Green Solutions Grand Prize from COP 28, giving global recognition for the work that had been done around climate change;

A video was presented regarding the [Council Energy Scheme](#).

Cabinet agreed to submit this video the LGA and Key Cities

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

- t) Sir John Akomfrah's Arcadia launched on 29 November 2023 at the Box;
- u) The headline acts for the Live Nation Summer Sessions music festival on The Hoe had been announced to include Sir Tom Jones, Sting, Bryan Adams, Madness, Blondie, Gabrielle, Cassyette and the Lightening Seeds and would take place 13 – 16 June 2024;

- v) Plymouth had hosted the annual You Can Do It awards in September and October for children in care and care experienced young people;
- w) A Care Leaver Employment Pathway was being developed.

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

- x) A letter would be sent to the Minister for Primary Care and Public Health to intervene with the closure of pharmacies and to take action against vital services being closed down.

74. **LGA Update**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) There was a £4 billion national funding gap over the next two years that had been identified by the LGA;
- b) Adult and Children Social Care costs had escalated rapidly and there were issues around market sustainability and prevention, the scale of the recruitment and retention challenge facing the care workforce, and persistent levels of unmet and under-met need.
- c) Within the next 2 years, it was estimated 1 in 5 councils would issue a Section 114;
- d) Following the Governments reshuffle on 13 November 2023 he had also written to new ministers setting out the case for Plymouth – Victoria Atkins MP (H&SC) and Andrew Griffith MP (Science, Research & Innovation)
- e) The new Local Government Minister Simon Hall was a former councillor and a former LGA Vice President;
- f) The LGA would submit evidence to the Department of Levelling up Homes and Communities seeking a Select Committee Enquiry on the role of Oflog;
- g) Work on the Local Government White Paper continued.

75. **Recommendation from the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Response**

Councillor Reilly introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) A thorough discussion had taken place at the scrutiny committee about how we make in house foster care more desirable.
- b) Bringing more foster carers in house would save money long term as the average cost for in house was £23,488 and the average independent agencies are £53,289
- c) Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to recommend to Cabinet that foster carers were granted council tax exemption.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- d) The cost to implement council tax exemption would be approximately £200,000 per annum.

The Leader proposed that Cabinet:

1. Thank the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their proposal of council tax exemption for foster carers;
2. Note the recommendations from the committee and commit to providing an update on the issue at an appropriate future meeting of the committee, once the entire revised package of support for Plymouth City Council foster carers had been agreed.

This was seconded by Councillor Cresswell and agreed by the Cabinet

76. **Corporate Plan Performance Report, Quarter Two 2023/24**

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

- a) Information would be added to the report around tolerances and comparators in order to better understand peaks and troughs in figures;
- b) The report would be linked to national data sets and benchmarked against other councils to better help us understand how Plymouth City Council is performing on a regional and national basis;
- c) The number of households prevented from becoming homeless had increased by 70 in the last quarter.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) added:

- d) Children's Services and Street Services were areas of concern for high levels of sickness levels due to anxiety and stress;
- e) Work with Corporate Management Team and managers would happen in 2024 to better support them and support their teams in managing sickness;
- f) As an employer Plymouth City Council made sure employees were supported whilst they work.

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

- g) Re-ablement systems had been put in place to aid vulnerable people with their hospital discharge to ensure they have the care they need to get well.

Cabinet noted the Corporate Plan Performance Report, Quarter Two 2023/24.

77. **Ageing Well Update**

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

- a) The Full of Life programme would support residents to enjoy life by aiding with age friendly spaces, participation and inclusion;
- b) A Steering Group for the Full of Life programme would be set up in 2024.

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) added:

- c) Supporting older people was one of the strategic aims in the Plymouth Plan;
- d) The first year of the programme would focus on strong engagement and a baseline assessment to have a start to an action plan;
- e) The age-friendly communities framework had been used and adapted to make it suitable for Plymouth;
- f) Plymouth City Council had applied to be part of the Centre for Ageing better and were waiting to hear feedback regarding the application;
- g) An Action Plan had been formed to focus on the shorter term actions.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- h) Regular updates would be brought to Cabinet on the actions taken.

The Leader proposed an additional recommendation that was seconded by Cllr Aspinall requesting that a detailed action plan was prepared and regular reports were provided to future Cabinet meetings.

The Cabinet agreed to note the report and for a detailed action plan and regular reports would be provided to future Cabinet meetings.

78. **Dental Task Force update**

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

- a) The Dental Taskforce was launched in June 2023;
- b) Large numbers of NHS dental providers had not been fulfilling their contracts, therefore costing the Integrated Care Board money.

Robert Nelder (Consultant for Public Health) added:

- c) The Integrated Care Board would set up an Expression of Interest process whereby NHS Dental providers in Plymouth who have got capacity can apply and be paid to do more, to go live in April 2024;
- d) The ring-fence for Plymouth had been lifted to enable the increased national costs of industrial action to be covered;

Cabinet agreed to note the report and recommended the following:

- 1. To continue to support the corporate plan priority, working with the NHS to provide better access to health care and dentistry;
- 2. To seek clarification on whether NHS England specifically said that the money is un-ring-fenced and it must be put towards the bottom line or whether they were referring to all underspend.

79. **Serious Violence Duty**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) In order to prevent serious violence in the city the following works had been implemented:
 - i. Plymouth City Council worked with vulnerable victims to offer support of safe housing;
 - ii. Devon and Cornwall Police had worked in significant hotspot areas to reduce crime and provide reassurance;
 - iii. By-standing training had been offered to help people understand safety challenged poor behaviour;
 - iv. Youth Justice mentoring had taken place with children who were at risk of being drawn into crime;
 - v. Anti-social behaviour specialists worked in schools to educate children as to what healthy relationships look like;
- b) The assessment showed that different communities were impacted differently by violence;
- c) Plymouth City Council and Partners would work together to address issues at a local level which would include focusing on understanding people who cause harm in the community;
- d) Learning from the impact of what had been undertaken would be used to shape the future of the service.

Tracey Naismith (Community Connections Strategic Manager) added:

- e) Draft terms of references had been agreed to lay out what the relation with the police and crime commissioners office would look like;
- f) Terms of reference would be agreed by the end of January 2024 with a view to receive £150,000 in funding for 12 months from the Home Office;
- g) The national indicators for serious violent reduction include: hospital admissions for assaults with knives and sharp objects, reduction of knife and sharp objects enabled serious violence recorded by the police and homicides recorded by the police;
- h) The local indications for serious violence were tailored to Plymouth and included: reduction in the numbers of recorded violent crimes, reduction of the number of young people going into the criminal justice system, a reduction of those who reoffend, and a reduction of school exclusions, absences and 16 – 17 year olds not in education;
- i) Public consultations with diverse communities would take place in the next 18 months.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- j) Although Plymouth had the lowest rate of overall crime compared to similar family groups, Plymouth was second in examples of violence that include injury and sexual offences;
- k) The Safer Plymouth Chair had met with the courts to better understand sentencing and delays in sentencing.

The Leader proposed additional recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Penberthy –

1. That an action plan for Plymouth City Council would be created;
2. That support be provided to representatives of the Police and Crime Panel and Safer Plymouth in questioning the OPCC's priorities and funding;
3. That the Performance, Finance and Customer Experience Overview and Scrutiny Committee would increase their role as a crime and disorder panel in holding Safer Plymouth to account;

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Endorse the Safer Plymouth model for violence preventing in Plymouth and strategic needs assessment;
2. That an action plan for Plymouth City Council would be created;

3. That support be provided to representatives of the Police and Crime Panel and Safer Plymouth in questioning the OPCC's priorities and funding;
4. That the Performance, Finance and Customer Experience Overview and Scrutiny Committee would increase their role as a crime and disorder panel in holding Safer Plymouth to account;

80. **Housing Business Case: Purchase of Temporary Accommodation**

Having considered the Part II information in the agenda pack Cabinet agreed to remain in the public meeting and not move to a private meeting to discuss this.

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

- a) A target would be to improve what Plymouth City Council could do for families in temporary accommodation;
- b) The solution to helping families in temporary accommodation would be buying properties to be used as temporary accommodation as the cost would be £13,600 cheaper per annum.

Jackie Kings (Community Connections Strategic Manager) added:

- c) The national housing market had a detrimental impact in Plymouth;
- d) Demand for housing in the past three years had increased with over 4,300 people (23/24 until 30 November) seeking advice and information regarding housing;
- e) The forecast financial pressure to Plymouth City Council was £2.4 million;
- f) The highest reason for presenting as homeless was landlords selling their houses and giving Section 21 Notices;
- g) A snapshot from people in temporary accommodation 30 November 2023 included:
 - i. 174 families with children
 - ii. 9 pregnancies
 - iii. 366 children
 - iv. 51 families in B and B's
 - v. 83 children in B and B's
- h) Examples of families in temporary accommodation were given;
- i) The purchase of homes would support the health and wellbeing needs of homeless households, would meet the statutory duties of the council by increasing the local authorities ability to provide affordable supported short-term accommodation for homeless households and would attract affordable homes

programme grants;

- j) The average annual cost of a bed and breakfast room was almost £22,000, with an estimated annual revenue cost per property purchased of over £8,000, therefore the annual to the Council saving is £13,600;
- k) £10 million would purchase a significant number of properties and deliver a significant saving to the budget;

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the business case to enable the purchase of properties to provide appropriate supported temporary accommodation for homeless households as an alternative to bed and breakfast and other high cost night paid accommodation and support reduction of temporary accommodation costs;
2. Allocate £10,000,000 for the project into the Capital Programme funded by service borrowing;
3. Allocate up to £5,000,000 of Homes England grant to the Capital Programme, subject to a successful bid;
4. Delegate the approval of individual and bulk purchases to the Service Director for Community Connections for all purchases within approved financial envelope in consultation with the cross departmental Strategic Steering Group, Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities and Cabinet Member for Finance;
5. Authorise the Service Director for Community Connections to approve business cases and award contracts relating to this project where they would otherwise not have had the authority to do so.