

Cabinet

Monday 12 February 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors

The meeting started at 14:00 and finished at 16:52.

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.

99. **Declarations of Interest**

Alison Critchfield (Monitoring Officer) agreed a dispensation for Councillor Evans OBE and Councillor Penberthy in respect of the agenda items ‘Plymouth Sound National Marine Park - National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Horizons Programme’ and ‘Folding in of LEP Functions’.

100. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 8 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

101. **Questions from the Public**

Question was submitted by Alderman George Wheeler	
Question: New bus shelters are being installed on the north-east (in-bound) side of St Budeaux Square. The long-awaited St Budeaux Square Interchange scheme has been advertised as starting this month (February 2024). How long are these shelters expected to remain in-situ and what is their full cost, please?	Response: The cost of each temporary shelter is £1,100. The full cost with installation is £7,400 funded entirely through the Transforming Cities Fund for St Budeaux Interchange. The shelter by the family butcher will be removed as the scheme progresses in March. The shelter by the taxi rank will remain in situ for the duration of works until late June. Both will provide passengers with the means to shelter from the elements and can be reused elsewhere on the network for future projects. After lots of questions about not having shelters here, now that they are in place Councillors Haydon and

Dingle tell me how happy residents are.

102. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

103. **Plymouth Sound National Marine Park - National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Horizons Programme**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The National Lottery Heritage Fund had awarded £11.6 million for the National Marine Park;
- b) Scaffolding would be erected before bathing season at Tinside Lido for the refurbishment of the first floor and terrace and a building on the poolside would be transformed into a place specifically for young people;
- c) Mount Batten Peninsula would be transformed with the installation of a new pontoon with accessibly changing rooms;
- d) This project would also deliver improved access to the 17th Century tower;
- e) There were plans to open up the Mount Edgumbe Garden Battery in, with work planned to start in early 2025;

Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) added:

- f) A five-year programme which would help the entire city get 'in, under and around' the National Marine Park was about to begin;
- g) Activities in the next 12 months included: meeting the Marine Park (National Marine Aquarium would travel across the city to bring the wonders of the park to other spaces), National Marine Park Swim space, Archaeological digs, rock-pooling, and coastal cleans;
- h) The Nature Boost programme would involve helping species within Plymouth Sound thrive over the next five years;

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) also added:

- i) The Learning and Discovery programme would take the National Marine Park into classrooms, and would help children to visit the park and discover inaccessible parts through technology;
- j) The National Marine Park team would host four paid internship roles each year;

- k) A city-wide volunteer recruitment drive would start in early spring which would offer the public the opportunity to support the National Marine Park.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. To accept and thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for its grant offer to support the delivery of the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park;
2. To approve the Capital Investment Business Case;
3. Approve the addition of £10,658,600 to the Capital Programme, to be funded line with the NHLF bid submission by:
 - a) National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant £6,158,600;
 - b) Corporate Borrowing £2,000,000 as previously agreed;
 - c) Fundraising £2,000,000 to be underwritten by Corporate Borrowing;
 - d) Partner Contribution £500,000;
4. To grant delegated authority to:
 - a) Head of Strategic Programmes (as the appointed Programme Manager), to make all operational decisions regarding the delivery of the NLHF approved project, in consultation with the Programme Director;
 - b) Head of Environmental Planning (as the appointed Programme Director) to make all other relevant decisions for the Council as the body accountable to the NLHF, in consultation with the Leader (or in his absence, Deputy Leader) and the Service Director (Economic Development) as the Senior Responsible Offer for the Project, and for the avoidance of doubt, in the absence of such names officers, the relevant decisions may be made by the Service Director (Economic Development), the Strategic Director (Place) or by any other officers to whom those powers have been sub-delegated.

104. **Finance and Capital Monitoring Report**

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

- a) There had been an overspend of approximately £1.2 million, which was an improvement from the previous report, where there had been an overspend of approximately £4.2 million. Councillor Lowry and the Finance team were confident that they would balance the budget in the remaining three months;
- b) The Council had seen significant pressures from Adult Social care, Children's Social Care, Home to School transport and homelessness in the city;
- c) In relation to overall expenditure for Children's Social Care, the Council was reporting an overall expenditure of £74 million against a budget of £63 million which was a £10.7 million increase from the previous budget;

- d) There was a forecasted overspend of almost £1.9 million for home to school transport for special education children;
- e) There was a forecasted overspend of £3.7 million in the People directorate, with £1.3 million in relation to additional care packages and demand of adult's requiring support and £2.4 million in relation to emergency accommodation for homelessness;
- f) There was a forecasted overspend of £1.9 million for Customer Services and Corporate Services;
- g) Pressures had been partially offset by: a £6 million budget saving identified in Corporate Services, £4.8 million of contingency had been released from the budget and £6 million of additional income had come from business rates;
- h) The five year Capital Programme for 2023-28 was forecast to be £398 million.

David Northey (Service Director for Finance) added:

- i) There was a statutory requirement to balance the remaining £1.2 million by 31 March 2024.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- j) There had been a tremendous amount of work by the Council and Cabinet members to reduce budget expenditure to ensure it was balanced and to also draw out best value in every part of expenditure.

Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) highlighted:

- k) Children's Services had been underfunded by the Government;
- l) The national number of children's social care placements costing £10,000 or more per week had risen significantly from 120 in 2018/19 to 1,510 in 2022/23. The number of councils with at least one of those placements had risen from 23% to 91% over the same period;
- m) In Plymouth in 2019 there were no residential placements costing £10,000 or more per week and in 2024 there were 16.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) added:

- n) The cost for pay by night accommodation in Plymouth had increased substantially. The budget for bed and breakfast accommodation had risen from £800,000 in 2019 to almost £4.5 million in 2024 and was due to COVID related issues as well as the Cost of Living crisis and changes within the private rented sector statutes;

- o) The Council had begun to see a stabilisation and reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation;
- p) Those that were in temporary accommodation had seen improvements to the standards of the accommodation;
- q) Plan for Homes 4 would be taken to Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2024 and would be brought to Cabinet in March. The Plan would look to tackle homelessness, the building of new homes and issues within the private rented sector to meet the housing needs in Plymouth;

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) also added:

- r) New approvals in the Capital Programme had allowed the LED lighting programme to continue which reduced Plymouth's carbon emissions and energy bills;
- s) Money had been awarded for the Mover (Micro-processing Optimised Vehicle Actuation Traffic Signalling) Traffic Signally Upgrade for Tavistock Road which would help reduce Co2 emissions from idling cars.

Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) added:

- t) The Council approved a £500,000 loan in relation to Ocean City Nature which would create a habitat bank and was the first one to be set up by a local authority in the country. The scheme would see major biodiversity enhancements on Plymouth sites and future projects costs would be passed onto developers to ensure Plymouth's nature and communities received the best benefit into the future.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Note the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period Nine as set out in this report in the sum of £1.204 million;
2. The Capital Budget 2023/2028 is revised to £723.701 million as shown in Table I and agreed to recommend these amendments to Full Council for approval.

105. **Proposed Budget Report 2024/25**

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

- a) Since the draft budget was published in November 2023 the final government settlement had been received. There had been a select committee which looked at the budget alongside a public and business engagement exercise and views had been inserted into the final budget report;

- b) The budget would protect vital public services despite significant demands on the Council;
- c) The Capital Finance Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy had been approved by the Audit and Governance Committee;
- d) Recommended a revenue budget of £236.662 million;
- e) The budget did not have any reductions in critical services and did not include the introduction of any new charges for services;
- f) The budget included additional funding for repairing roads and grass cutting;
- g) There was an increase in core resources totalling £18.812 million which included the benefits of business rates growth, the Devon wide rates pool and additional income from council tax due to an increase in properties and the collection rate;
- h) There would be additional expenditure of £12,070 million to focus on issues within Children's Services directorate and £13.7 million for the People's directorate;
- i) £3.287 million was allocated within the budget to aid in the increase of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation;
- j) Assumed future funding ambitions of the Capital Programme was set at £325 million as set out in appendix 6.
- k) The capital programme had become more expensive due to the rise in interest rates and the capital programme would be reviewed to ensure its affordability for future years;

David Northey (Service Director for Finance) added:

- l) The budget was dependent on the outcome of the conversations had with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which started in summer 2023;
- m) Plymouth City Council were waiting for Exceptional Financial Support in the form of a capitalisation direction from DLUHC;
- n) There was an outstanding issue regarding a transaction made in October 2019 to significantly reduce the cost of the pension deficit. The Council accounted for the transaction as Capital, however the Council's independent auditors stated that although the transaction was not detrimental to the public purse, it was unusual and they had concerns around the process that the Council went through and whether the transaction should be capital or revenue.
- o) The Council had requested this capitalisation direction in order to close the 19/20 accounts and to set a budget for 2024/24. If granted this would allow the

Council to progress an accounting adjustment for 19/20 and close those accounts.

- p) The Full Council meeting scheduled for the end of February had moved to allow the government to make a decision on the capitalisation direction by early March 2024.
- q) The Council had a statutory obligation to set the Council tax rates by the close of play 11 March 2024.
- r) An alternative budget, should the Council not receive the capitalisation direction had not been put forward and a letter had been sent from DLUHC which advised they were working with the Council to set a balanced budget;
- s) If the Council did not receive the capitalisation direction by 8 March 2024, a further report would be submitted to Cabinet by that date with further recommendations which would then go to Council for approval.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) also added:

- t) The requested capitalisation direction would be a one off for the Council and it was expected with conditions attached to the support;
- u) In 2019/20 Grant Thornton (Independent Auditors) had undertaken a governance review in relation to the transaction which they considered to be novel and innovative. As a result of the review, recommendations were accepted by Council and subsequently implemented;
- v) The upcoming Full Council meeting had been moved to 8 March 2024 to allow the in principal decision regarding the Exceptional Financial Support to come from DLUHC.
- w) The budget was significant in that the Council would not be making cuts to frontline services;
- x) The Council had modelled cost and volume of huge demands on its services for Children's services, Adult Social Care and for homelessness;
- y) The Council had sought to provide the right funding for children's services within its improvement journey.

Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) added:

- z) The previous budget had not had sufficient funds to cover grounds maintenance including grass cutting;
- aa) An additional £300,000 had been added to the budget to help with grounds running costs and improving grass cutting in both crematoria and play parks;

- bb) Net staffing for grass cutting would improve and there would be the hiring of an additional tractor driver and specialist driver to make the required difference residents requested;
- cc) £70 million of projects over the coming years in the Capital Programme had been included to focus on delivering a net zero Plymouth, which meant this was the greenest budget Plymouth City Council had ever tried to introduce.
- dd) The Climate investment fund revenue budget had increased from £250,000 to £450,000 and would support approximately £2 million worth of investment in the capital programme in Plymouth decarbonisation projects.

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

- ee) There had been significant investment into Brickfield's sports facility with other partners and would provide a new Health and Wellbeing hub as well as providing sports facilities for elite sports in one of the most deprived areas in the city;
- ff) Plymouth City Council had been working with Active Leisure to support the Life Centre, Tinside and to ensure swimming at Mount Wise remained free;
- gg) Together with the Sports Development team and partners across the city the Council was accessing as many communities as possible;
- hh) In light of inclusivity, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology would be used to alleviate everyday work from staff and allow them to be available to help the public;
- ii) The HROD budget had been right sized to ensure staff at the Council were being paid the living wage and apprentices were being paid appropriately;
- jj) Cost of Living Action Plan would be expanded and continued to support residents with the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) highlighted:

- kk) The budget setting for Children's services has been as a result of intense analysis and detailed planning over a sustained period of time. Staff from across the Council had been involved in building a budget that was realistic, addressing issues around volume and demand and the conditions of the economic market;
- ll) The service would see increased staffing to meet the demand, but to also maintain appropriate caseloads to ensure good quality work as part of its improvement journey
- mm) A significant issue for Children's Services was the rising cost of independent specialists and residential placements which was reflected in the lack of placements in the southwest region and across the country;

- nn) Whilst an increase in the budget was proposed to offset the current cost and volume of our children requiring a service now, further growth had been built into the budget to identify solutions and changes in practice to enable more children to live at home or with extended family or in homes with foster carers closer to Plymouth;
- oo) A recent Foster Care Summit had set the programme for growth and support of Plymouth City Council's in-house fostering and special guardianship service. Internal foster carers were vital for the city and the Council was committed to increasing the number of foster carers and a better package of reward and support to them based on feedback;
- pp) The budget allowed the service to invest in staff to ensure optimised case-loads to enable social workers and support staff to do good quality work with children and families. This was also vital in ensuring good recruitment and retention of social workers for the city;
- qq) The budget would provide help and support to children and families at the right time and would develop the early help offer for partners in the city. It would improve support for the Council's in house foster carers and special guardians to ensure that there were fewer children living in residential placements;
- rr) There would be additional capacity in the Council's brokerage and commissioning team which would help placement sufficiency challenges;
- ss) New training and development opportunities had been created as a result of the budget and alongside a successful recruitment drive with the Council's current recruitment and retention offer it would help Plymouth to achieve a permanent and successful workforce;
- tt) The budget would ensure the continuation of investment in culture in Plymouth and it was predicted to see considerable return on those investments on Plymouth and its residents;
- uu) Plymouth's journey on culture place making and culture led regeneration had been nationally recognised by the Arts Council who published a major case study on Plymouth;
- vv) The budget would see the Box bringing in a quarter of a million visitors to the city, an international programme of arts and cultural events, a cultural schools programme, an engagements programme which would work with deprived communities in the city, and support for cultural organisations including Plymouth Culture, Theatre Royal, the Barbican theatre and the Art's Cinema;
- ww) The city would deliver a events programme on the Hoe including the new summer sessions
- xx) There would be significant income generation and included £2.6 million from the Box, £1.1 million for Mount Edgecumbe and would be cost neutral for the first

time, and £750,000 for events;

yy) The Council secured £50 million worth of grants had been secured over the past five years.

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria) added:

zz) The new state-of-the-art crematorium would be opened in a few months and the park would deliver an up to date facility for bereaving families of Plymouth;

aaa) There would be three ceremony rooms which would be able to hold up to 120 people or twelve for intimate funerals. The park would also offer customised lighting and module furniture which would be moveable to enable accessibility for all;

bbb) The new lighting system would be a first for the country and you would be able to colour the wall in the deceased's favourite colour

ccc) There would be a new reception and admin area for families to meet the Council's staff in a comfortable area and the park would have a public café and two function rooms that would be available to families;

ddd) Within the budget for bereavement services, fees would remain the same.

eee) The City would look to have council staff within libraries instead of having to travel across the city.

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) added:

fff) SEND sufficiency places would be pre-planned and modular units were being opened at Millford, Cann Bridge and College Road Primary School. The Council was looking to have sufficient SEND places which might be Hubs or units within Plymouth's schools;

ggg) School Transport costs had been a significant challenge to the Council and the Council was committed to undertaking travel training which would provide long term benefits to some young people to become independent travellers in the city and provide crucial skills for life;

hhh) The budget shared a fundamental commitment to unlocking Plymouth's potential to support young people by aiding in apprenticeship training and supporting internships;

iii) The Council was on track to provide 60 supported internships for young people;

jjj) There were 11 apprentices working on the crematoria's, 26 weeks of work experience, 123 qualification levels, 270 apprentice training weeks and there was engagement with 2,757 students.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) added:

- kkk) £25,000 a year had been allocated to tackle child poverty and had been used to deal with children's dental health and literacy which allowed for transformational project work. The Council would develop a new approach to child poverty talking about strengths rather than deficits and in June 2024 the Council would bring together a report in the activities underway for Plymouth residents to build bridges to opportunity;
- lll) There was a business as usual base budget which allowed for existing need in relation to homelessness and due to the work undertaken in 2023/24, Councillor Penberthy was confident in the £1 million savings target that was put in as the system would be transformed;
- mmm) There was investment of £10 million in temporary accommodation and £15 million for Plan for Homes 3;
- nnn) There would be further investments into Plymouths assets which included the Guildhall refurbishment, Firestone bay pool refurbishment and the opening up of the Council House had been included within the 2024/25 proposed budget.

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) also added:

- ooo) The budget allowed the delivery of a new cycle and walking track called Brian Vincent Way in respect of the passing of Honorary Alderman Vincent;
- ppp) The proposed budget would allow the Council to keep the velocity machine, whilst looking for new and innovative measures;
- qqq) A new bus service had been introduced and the department for Transport would like to bring their bus team to Plymouth to discuss future funding;

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

- rrr) The Social Care Discharge Fund would continue which would help the Council to help local hospitals get out of there and into either the appropriate care they require or back home with a package of support;
- sss) The proposed budget allowed Caring Plymouth to carry on and improve the skills of the social care workforce.

Cabinet agreed to:

- I. Note that a formal request had been submitted to DLUHC for a Capitalisation Direction, referred to as Exceptional Financial Support, in reference to the accounting treatment of the Council's pension arrears in 2019/20;

2. Note that the proposed budget was dependant on the receipt of either the Capitalisation Direction of a Letter of Assurance from CLUHC, ahead of the Full Council meeting;
3. Note the Financial Risks as set out in Appendix 8;
4. Note that a report from the Council's Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) on the robustness of the budget estimated and the adequacy of the level of reserves would be a separate report to Council.
5. Note the recommendations and resulting actions from the Select Committee Budget Scrutiny;
6. Recommended the following to Full Council, subject to amendments by the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader for any final technical adjustments:
 - a) The Revenue Budget 2024/25 £236.622 million;
 - b) The drawdown of £1.448 million of flexible capital receipts, as set out in the report;
 - c) The Capital Budget 2024/25 £723.701 million;
 - d) The Capital Financing Strategy 2024/25, including an adjustment to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) within 2024/25 revenue budget, as an amendment to the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25 to release previous overpayment totalling £0.400 million;
 - e) The Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25.

Change to the order of business

Cabinet agreed to bring forward item 11, Folding in of LEP Functions.

106. Folding in of LEP functions

Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy Enterprise and Employment) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) A change of Government policy meant LEPs would not be funded going forward and the functions would be folded into relevant upper tier authorities;
- b) The functions were: the growth board, the economic strategy and the listed projects which were already delivered by the Council.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the proposed Integration Plan (subject to minor changes) for the Health of the Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership (HOTSWLEP) and the transfer of the LEP functions to the Council by 1 April 2024;
2. Authorise the Strategic Director for Place to approve the transfer arrangement and agreements with Somerset, Devon and Torbay Council's that cover operational implementation of the LEP functions, and the allocations of LEP residual funding, resources, and assets to the four councils;
3. Accept any transition funding and resources for Plymouth from the allocated government funding.

107. **Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Future Financing**

Cabinet agreed to combine item 9, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Future Financing, and item 10, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2024-2025 Revenue and Capital Programme.

(The minutes for both items were recorded under item 10)

108. **Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2024-2025 Revenue and Capital Programme**

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry were operated, maintained and improved jointly by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council on a 'user pays' principle, and was funded by toll income;
- b) As per the Tamar Bridge Act, toll income was ring-fenced, and operated as a self-financing business;
- c) The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee (TBTFJC) Terms of Reference required the Cabinets of the Joint Authorities to recommend the annual TBTF budget and Business Plan to their respective Full Councils;
- d) The financial forecasts supporting the 2022/23 toll increase had not predicted the war in Ukraine and its global repercussions, specifically fuel and energy price increases, which had driven cost-inflation to over 10% at times. This had eroded the planned financial envelope to provide a balance-budget;
- e) There had been no evidence of the anticipated return to pre-COVID traffic levels, with traffic at both crossings running at approximately 90% of pre-COVID levels. As a result, the undertaking had found itself with an identified reserves shortfall in 2025/26;
- f) It was noted that the Section 151 Officers from both parent authorities had confirmed to TBTFJC that there was no provision for financial support from the budgets of either parent authority, as other crucial services provided by the Councils were already under considerable financial pressure;

- g) This report sought Cabinet's endorsement to recommend to Full Council that an application be made to the Secretary of State for the toll increase as described in recommendation I of the report (previously £2.60 - to £3.00 for cars and pro rata for other vehicles and the TAG, previously £1.30 to £1.50, again pro rata for other vehicles) which would address the forecast gap in the undertaking's finances in 25/26 and provide an improved level of resilience for subsequent years;
- h) Subject to the Cabinet endorsement of the proposed toll increase, then the report also sought Cabinet's endorsement to recommend to Full Council that the proposed Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2024/25 and associated Annual Business Plan be approved and that indicative figures for the subsequent three years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 be noted;
- i) A parallel report had been taken to Cornwall Council the previous week, where it was recommended to Full Council for approval;
- j) The proposed toll application to the Secretary of State would enable the parent authorities to set a balanced budget. The proposed revenue expenditure and capital works items were essential to preserve the integrity of the assets and to the delivery of the TBTF Business Plan, taking the service sustainably into the future.

Cabinet agreed to recommend the following to Full Council:

1. The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee's preferred option for toll revision of a toll increase on cash to £3.00 (previously £2.60) and TAG to £1.50 (previously £1.30) and pro rata for other classes of user, be approved and be made to the Secretary of State in accordance with the applicable legislation;
2. The Joint Committee's endorsement of the Tamar 2050 crossings programme of activity be recognised;
3. The 2024/25 revenue estimates and capital programme and the draft 2024/25 business plan, as set out in the appendices to the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee Report of 12 January 2024, be approved;
4. The longer-term forecast to 2027/28 was noted.

109. **Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter Three 2023/2024**

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

- a) New tools enabled the integration of national comparators in the report;
- b) Longer time periods of data points had been used to prepare for the greater utilisation of control charts, which helped establish whether performance was

stable and operating within existing and expected variation;

- c) Between October and December the employment rate had risen by 2.3%;
- d) The number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the Council had decreased by 104;
- e) The number of young people aged 16 to 17 in education, employment and training had increased by 3%;
- f) Repeat Child Protection plans had reduced by 2%;
- g) 332 households were prevented from becoming homeless;
- h) 30 children and 315 adults had been added to dental waiting lists;
- i) From quarter four the percentage of black road defects completed on time would be reported;
- j) Data from LG Inform would be used to compare performance indicators in Plymouth.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

110. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- a) There had been approximately £100 million of external investment won for the next two years;
- b) Majority of the money that had been won came through Economic Development;
- c) Homes England had visited;
- d) Plymouth and Devon Freeport had secured the Sherford Employment Land;
- e) £20 million had been secured for the Green Hydrogen Hub at Langage and was the first round of the Hydrogen Allocation Fund;
- f) Two new direct developments were happening on Council land at the Freeport;
- g) Millbay Docks would be strengthened to take more freight.

111. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) The Youth Investment Fund had invested £1.6 million to expand Derriford Community Park;
- b) 40 hectares of previously inaccessible countryside would be opened to local residents which brought the total accessible countryside to 146 hectares;
- c) Tree planting season had started with over 1,750 trees in the ground across Plymouth which was halfway towards the tree planting target for the winter;
- d) Over 80,000 people had viewed the 'Right Stuff, Right Bin' graphics on Facebook and X (formally Twitter);
- e) Plymouth's Green Community Hubs was a new partnership project between Plymouth City Council, the National Trust and other local organisations;
- f) A 'Who's Who' page had been launched on the Climate Connections website where businesses could share and learn from each other's sustainability journeys.

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

- g) There would be 60 supported internships by the end of February 2024;
- h) Encore South West post-16 team were leading the way with including recruitment, implementing paper application and additional application support for SEND young people and care experienced young people;
- i) The latest Plymouth Apprenticeship Bulletin was released and highlighted over 320 current vacancies;
- j) The Apprentice of the Year Award was held at the Market Hall and celebrated 45 outstanding apprentices.

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

- k) The RNLI would be the official charity partner for the British Firework Championships;
- l) South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain 1600 exhibitions would open at the box the coming weekend;
- m) The Council was successful in the bid for £2.4 million share of the £560 million Youth Investment Fund which would expand, refurbish and improve the Frederick Street Centre in Stonehouse, Efford Youth and Community Centre and Honicknowle Youth and Community Centre.

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

- n) More than 3,000 had accessed the online cost of living hub in the past four weeks, majority of which accessed the 70 warm welcome spaces page;
- o) The next most visited page was help with food costs, energy costs and mental health support.

112. **LGA Update**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The Public Health Allocation Grant was confirmed at £16.7 million, which was a £300,000 increase, however the total national combined loss on Public Health Grants since 2015 was £858 million;
- b) The LGA continued to lobby for multi-year settlements;
- c) Michael Gove had granted £500 million, £2.6 of which would be for Plymouth City Council;
- d) The Local Services Grant of £2.5 million had been lost in 2023;
- e) There was good support in Parliament for Local Government needs and the number of Councils who would face Section 114 notices;
- f) 20% of Councils would potentially face Section 114 notices in the next two years;
- g) Over the past 14 years, Local Government had been 900,000 jobs disappear, however in the same period 900,000 jobs had appeared in Westminster.

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