

# Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 14 February 2024**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.

Councillor Tuffin, Vice Chair.

Councillors Carlyle, Gilmour, Goslin, McLay, Noble, Penrose (substitute for Councillor Raynsford), Sproston, Stoneman and Tuohy (substitute for Councillor Stevens).

Apologies for absence: Councillors Raynsford, Salmon and Stevens.

Absent: Councillor Partridge.

Also in attendance: Councillors Briars-Delve, Evans OBE and Penberthy, Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) (via Teams), Jonathan Bell (Head of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development) (via Teams), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Matt Garratt (Service Director for Community Connections), Toby Hall (Project Manager), Emmanuelle Marshall (Low Carbon City Officer), Neil Mawson (Housing Delivery Manager), Lauren Paton (Economic Development Officer), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy Enterprise & Employment) and Hannah Whiting (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.19 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the Panel 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.*

## 30. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interests were made.

## 31. **Minutes**

The Committee unanimously agreed the minutes of the meeting on 8 November 2023 as a correct record.

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting on 22 January 2024 as a correct record.

For (10)

Councillors Carlyle, Gilmour, Goslin, Noble, Penrose, Sproston, Stoneman, Tuffin and Tuohy.

Abstain (1)

Councillor Bingley.

Against (0)

Absent/Did Not Vote (0)

32. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

33. **NZAP 2024-27**

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

- a) The Council had pledged in 2019 to reach net zero emissions by 2030;
- b) Important to produce a transparent annual progress report;
- c) Work with partners on improving the energy efficiency in social housing;
- d) Beryl bikes and the electric car club;
- e) Climate Impact Assessment;
- f) Right stuff, right bin campaign;
- g) Climate Ambassadors;
- h) Climate Connections Website and business engagement;
- i) 84% of the actions in the 2023/24 NZAP had been completed, or were on track;
- j) Important to include commitments which were highlighted in the report in light green;
- k) Thanks to the officers for their hard work on the programme;
- l) Suggestions had been taken forward from carbon literacy training sessions with Councillors;
- m) New commitments included electric buses and heat networks;
- n) It was hoped that the majority of the Council's power would come from renewable sources and solar energy would play a large part in this;
- o) Food waste kerb-side collection;

- p) 19 new commitments relating to behaviour change including working with schools to gain eco-school status and neighbourhood level community plans.

Supported by Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Jonathan Bell (Head of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development) and Emmanuelle Marshall (Low Carbon City Officer), in response to questions, the following was discussed:

- q) A narrative would be helpful on changes from one plan to the next in the future, and why some commitments had been removed/altered;
- r) Appendix B detailed the challenges faced in relation to the commitments;
- s) BHPI0C had been expanded to include what had previously been included in BHPI0E;
- t) IT infrastructure and the suggestion that other companies such as Google have done more work to be 'greener' than Microsoft;
- u) Environmental benefits of working from home;
- v) The go green travel plan;
- w) Work was underway through the relevant Cabinet Member (Councillor Coker), the Councillor Bus Champion (Councillor Kevin Sproston), Plymotion and more to encourage people to use buses and bikes more;
- x) Plymouth was the most successful in the country for bikeability;
- y) Public realm works included opportunities for improvements of transport infrastructure;
- z) Richard Stevens, CEO of CityBus, was working with the Council on the ZEBRA 2 bid for electric buses;
- aa) Bus shelters were not Council assets, new ones were being installed with 'green roofs';
- bb) Carbon literacy training was moving away from the accredited course, to adapt a more flexible training sessions and to deliver the training 'in-house', and the possibility of introducing this into the Councillor induction process;
- cc) Carbon literacy training for community groups;
- dd) Work was ongoing with the procurement team on a weighting factor for environmental impact, when tendering for contracts to be brought back to Committee;

- ee) Climate Emergency Planning Statement built on what was included in the Joint Local Plan, in relation to planning applications;
- ff) Mixed bins should be installed as standard in new schemes across the city;
- gg) Suggestion that the word 'new' be included in T5F;
- hh) Challenges of introducing food waste collection.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Support and endorse the Plymouth City Council Net Zero Action Plan 2024-2027.

#### 34. **Plan for Homes 4**

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) The Plan for Homes programme had delivered more than 7,500 new homes across Plymouth in the past nine years;
- b) The Plan for Homes detailed the Council's priorities for ensuring that Plymouth had the housing to tackle the local effects of the national housing crisis;
- c) Reduction in delivery of affordable housing;
- d) Strong track record of achievement and innovation;
- e) Increasingly challenging housing delivery landscape;
- f) The plan aimed to deliver 5,000 new homes in the next five years;
- g) Climate action would be a cross cutting theme of Plan for Homes 4;
- h) Successes so far had included:
  - i. 7,581 homes delivered in all of which 1,980 were affordable;
  - ii. 48 Council sites released to developers for new homes;
  - iii. £2.485 million of land release and brownfield land release funding from Government;
  - iv. 385 long term empty homes had been brought back into use;
  - v. Partnered on the regeneration of Devonport, North Prospect and Barne Barton;

- vi. 24 train and build service veteran homes;
  - vii. 33 wheelchair homes across various sites to meet high demand for accessible homes;
  - viii. Worked with PEC (Plymouth Energy Community) and Livewest to deliver 40 energiesprong net zero carbon homes in King's Tamerton;
  - ix. They were close to completing on the first Council-built housing project for 40 years;
- i) In recent years new and affordable housing delivery in Plymouth had reduced to record low levels;
  - j) Impact of national approaches to investment and taxation for private landlords;
  - k) As of January 2024, 8,597 households were on the Devon Home Choice register, of which 1,351 were in a high banding of priority need, and 1365 had accessibility needs;
  - l) In the past five years, the number of social housing lets had reduced by 36%;
  - m) In 2023/24 there had been an average of 173 homelessness applications per month;
  - n) There 342 households in temporary accommodation at the time of the meeting, of which 167 were families;
  - o) Plan for Homes 4 would accelerate existing activity as well as bring forward new initiatives to focus action;
  - p) Six housing themes had been identified for action:
    - i. Affordable housing;
    - ii. Market housing;
    - iii. Private rented housing;
    - iv. Partnerships;
    - v. Supported and specialist housing;
    - vi. Climate action.

Supported by Matt Garratt (Service Director for Community Connections) and Neil Mawson (Housing Delivery Manager), in response to questions the following was discussed:

- q) Long term empty homes often had a different set of circumstances and required different action plans involving different approaches such as enforcement action and/or financial support;
- r) At the time of the meeting there were just over 800 empty homes (empty for longer than 6 months);
- s) Two CPOs would go to Cabinet in March 2024 relating to homes that had been empty for more than 10 years;
- t) The team worked with partners to bring empty homes back into use;
- u) Bungalows were land heavy, and did not maximise housing delivery, but some bungalow provision was included in some schemes across the city;
- v) Joint Local Plan identified the city centre as a housing development area and there might be opportunities for older residents to relocate to these, close to amenities;
- w) A large number of areas identified for housing were for a small amount of homes;
- x) Each housing site was looked at individually with regards to mitigation for anti-social behaviour;
- y) There were areas across the city that had high numbers of Airbnb's, which was impacting housing, and this needed national government regulation;
- z) Taxation and regulation on the private rental sector was needed to improve the sector.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Note the report.

### 35. **Economic Intelligence and Insight**

Lauren Paton (Economic Development Officer) introduced the item and went through the information on the slides in the agenda pack and covered data updates on the following in relation to Plymouth:

- a) Enterprise start-ups;
- b) Job vacancies and unemployment;
- c) Productivity and GVA (gross value added);
- d) Full time equivalent jobs.

Supported by David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), in response to questions it was further explained:

- e) The committee could be provided with a half page report with more detail on why there was a continual decline in productivity from 2017 onwards;
- f) The COVID19 pandemic and Brexit had impacted productivity data in Plymouth, but the most recent data was from 2021, so the picture would become clearer with more data;
- g) 100% GVA was not achievable due to the skewing effect of London being included in data;
- h) London's economy was less reliant on manufacturing and therefore had been impacted less by the COVID19 pandemic lockdowns.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Note the report.

### 36. **Plan for Economic Growth**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The plan had been developed in 2014 and refreshed in 2020;
- b) In the last decade Plymouth City Council had delivered a £365 million capital programme, which had brought in £600 million of match funding;
- c) There was a £1 billion development pipeline;
- d) A rolling average of £30 million of grant funding per year had been secured;
- e) Transformed the skyline of the city;
- f) Delivered major inward investment such as The Barcode, Land Registry offices and The Range headquarters;
- g) Nationally recognised for cultural driven place making done as a local authority;
- h) Championed tourism;
- i) Nationally recognised marine sector manufacturing;
- j) Developed more employment land than ever before;
- k) Need for the dockyard;

- l) Opportunity for growth in Plymouth's ports;
- m) Environmental benefits of container ships.
- n) The work on the refresh would be done in two stages, first a review of the evidence based and identification of priorities, then work with the Growth Board and the scrutiny panel to develop four delivery plans:
  - i. Productivity and high value jobs;
  - ii. Inclusive growth;
  - iii. Sustainable growth;
  - iv. Civic pride and regeneration.

Supported by Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy Enterprise & Employment) and David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), in response to questions the following was discussed:

- o) Wage rates increasing;
- p) Need for an ecosystem where Plymouth was an attractive place to live, work and study;
- q) Skills and training for young people;
- r) Opportunity that when high economic investment is made, that there was social value in opportunities for the local community;
- s) Devonport had some of the most significant regeneration in the country, which invested in the area;
- t) There was a continued aim to strive for excellence in all schools across the city;
- u) Transport infrastructure had been overlooked would be included in the refresh.

The Committee agreed:

- I. To endorse the approach on the Economic Strategy including the production of 4 delivery plans and governance arrangements;
  - Phase one – March 2024. Vision, Analysis of the main underlying competitive advantages and strengths of Plymouth, opportunities for strategic connections across regions, growth over the next 10 years;
  - Phase two – post March 2024 and - Plymouths top public and private sector investment priorities;



2. To add the 4 delivery plans to the Scrutiny work programme.

37. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee agreed to:

1. Follow up on the letter sent to Rt Hon Sir John Whittingdale OBE MP regarding increasing utility costs for the cultural sector as no reply has been received;
2. Note the tracking decisions document.

38. **Work Programme**

Hannah Whiting (Democratic Advisor) clarified:

- a) The review into public toilets would be looked at by the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee agreed to:

1. Note its work programme.