

Cabinet

Monday 9 September 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Dann.

Also in Attendance: Councillor Sarah Allen, Councillor John Stephens, Paul Barnard (Strategic Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Jonathan Bell (Head of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development), Liz Bryant (Head of Legal Services), Emma Crowther (Service Director for Integrated Commissioning), Matthew Fulton (Lead Accountancy Manager), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health (via Microsoft Teams)), David Haley (Director of Children's Services), Karime Hassan (Interim Strategic Director for Growth), Pete Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager), Martin Ivatt (Regeneration and Placemaking Manager), Laura Juett (Public Health Specialist), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Lisa Linscott (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), David Northey (Service Director for Finance), Amanda Paddison (Head of Access to Learning), Temilola Salimon (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families), Jonathan Selman (Net Zero Delivery Officer), Nick Shaw (Public Health Registrar), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Stuart Elford (CEO of Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce), Nigel Godefroy (Chair of City Centre Company) and Steve Hughes (Chief Executive of City Centre Company).

The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 5.00 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.

28. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

29. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held 12 August 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

30. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

31. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

32. **The Transformation of Armada Way**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) welcomed Paul Barnard (Service Director of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Martin Ivatt (Regeneration and Placemaking Manager).

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and provided the following update:

- a) Plymouth had been cited in the national press as a great place to live and work;
- b) The city centre was being reimagined as a modern, vibrant and mixed-use destination with new community living at its heart;
- c) It was important to remember the city centre was not just for visitors, but also for the residents who would use the city centre as their backyard;
- d) A visit by Sir Oliver Letwin, who was on the Homes England Board, was hosted on 21 August 2024. The visit included the railway station, Armada Way, the Hoe;
- e) The Homes England Board would be hosted in Plymouth in November;
- f) There were ambitious targets for house building within Plymouth and the city centre would be fundamental to achieving that target;
- g) The average city had 8500 people living in the city centre, whereas Plymouth only had 850 due to a post-war policy which moved people out of the city and into the suburbs;
- h) Plymouth was developing plans with a hope Partners would buy into the vision and make further investments;

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

- i) On 19 February 2024 the design of the Armada Way project was approved, and the Strategic Director for Place was instructed to take all necessary steps to confirm the final construction cost;
- j) Cabinet instructed the Strategic Director for Place to establish a City Centre Public Realm Board, which would coordinate and monitor all existing public realm revenue maintenance and oversee new incoming regeneration initiatives;
- k) Since February 2024, Officers and Specialist Independent Consultants had analysed the details in the documentation from the contractor and the bill of quantities;

- l) Trial pits and surveys had been undertaken to verify the costs and assess the risk to delivery;
- m) Total construction costs for the scheme had been verified at £29.8 million, two thirds of which was funded by external sources. The total cost to the tax payer was £11.2 million;
- n) Further grant funding would be applied for when it was available in an attempt to reduce the £11.2 million cost to the tax payer;
- o) Future projects for the city centre included Royal Parade and the District Heat Network Pilot;
- p) In order to aid operation and support existing businesses during ongoing development of Armada Way, there were five specific actions:
 - 1. Subject to Cabinet agreement, a letter would be written to city centre businesses setting out the details of the programme;
 - 2. A dedicated Armada Way Liaison Officer had been appointed who would be the single point of contact for all city centre businesses during the construction works and will be based in the Knowledge Hub on Armada Way;
 - 3. Regular question and answer sessions would commence in September to address concerns and issues that businesses might have;
 - 4. The website would continue to be updated with new information about the progress of the scheme;
 - 5. Plymouth City Council (PCC) would continue to liaise with the City Centre Company on all aspects of the Armada Way scheme until it's completion;
- q) Existing businesses in the city centre did not want to invest in the city centre because of the state of the public realm, however new businesses coming into Armada Way had seen the work undertaken in Old Town Street and New George Street;
- r) It was made certain that costs were robust through trial pits, surveys, and by employing consultants;
- s) The new play village was the size of five tennis courts and the seating would accommodate approximately 500 people;
- t) There would be an entirely new CCTV system and there would be 5,159 square metres of accessible green space, similar to the size of the park on West Hoe. There would also be also new granite walkways of six metres either side and a new cycle path of 500 metres;
- u) There would be 22,000 square metres of accessible public realm which was the size of three football pitches;

- v) There would be a new sustainable drainage system which would provide up to a 78% reduction in surface water runoff which went into the combined sewage system;
- w) Although it was a lot of money to invest, it was being invested wisely to the benefit of existing businesses with the hope to attract new businesses and provide much needed housing in the city.

Nigel Godefroy (Chair of the City Centre Company) added:

- x) Congratulated the Council on behalf of the City Centre Company on the commitment to the scheme and to the city centre;
- y) Armada Way no longer served its purpose as the confident gateway to the city centre and gave visitors a poor first impression of a city centre in decline with many empty buildings;
- z) The plans were fully supported by the City Centre Company as they presented the city with a once in a generation opportunity to create a safe, welcoming and vibrant city centre;
- aa) Quality public realm drove quality investment which drove value for everyone;
- bb) The high quality of the Armada Way scheme would set the quality template for further regeneration projects;
- cc) Recent investments into The Box, The Barcode, Civic Square, New George Street and Old Town Street meant new businesses were taking over empty properties;
- dd) The investments in the city centre, together with the proposed Armada Way scheme, would unlock millions of pounds of further investment for housing, leisure and other uses.

Steve Hughes (Chief Executive of the City Centre Company) added:

- ee) The new public spaces in Old Town Street, New George Street and Armada Way gave the City Centre Company more ability to host events and activities that would create community;
- ff) New lighting and new CCTV would encourage new businesses into a 'café culture' with more outdoor seating.

Stuart Elford (CEO of Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce) added:

- gg) The investment was a clear signal of ambition, confidence and leadership and would get Plymouth talked about for the right reasons;
- hh) This investment would appeal to businesses and employers, would attract and retain investors, would attract talent for highly skilled and higher paid jobs, and university students;

- ii) The evening and night time visitor economy would improve;
- jj) The regeneration of the city centre would encourage new uses for empty buildings, including hotels, meeting rooms and much needed conference facilities.

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

- kk) The 'Lets Talk Armada Way' consultation was set out in detail in meetings held 5 February 2024 and 19 February 2024, which responded to recommendations from the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding revising the plans for Armada Way;
- ll) The design agreed at the meetings in February would be funded mainly from external sources;
- mm) The Armada Way Scheme demonstrated PCC's aspirations for enhancing the quality of the public realm in Plymouth and also the wider vision for creating a transformed, modern, thriving city centre which would meet the needs of the people of Plymouth.

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

- nn) The Armada Way Scheme would have a total of 202 mature trees, which was more than existed there before;
- oo) Provision for wildlife would be enhanced through shrubs, wild flowers, reed beds, bee hotels and bird boxes;
- pp) The design was improved following the 'Let's Talk Armada Way' consultation by increasing the diversity of tree species, allowing additional under-planting as well as 'greening the grey', all of which were specific changes raised by residents and community groups;
- qq) The proposed sustainable urban drainage system which formed an integral part of the scheme design was essential for the city centre's adaption to climate change. The existing peak surface water runoff had been modelled at 311 litres per second, and the implementation of the sustainable urban drainage system would reduce this to 68.5 litres per second, equating to a 78% of surface water being diverted away from the combined sewage system in heavy rainfall events.

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

- rr) The new play village would attract increased numbers of children and young people to use the city centre;
- ss) The Scheme had been critically reviewed by Make Space for Girls who recognised many positives for girls;

- tt) Changes were being made to small elements of the design to make it more welcoming and accommodating for the under-represented demographic of young girls in the public realm and play spaces;
- uu) The approved scheme was an inclusive design which provided opportunities for young people and supported their mental and physical development and health, as well as their intellectual development;
- vv) The Scheme would provide places for young people to socialise and the proposed pop-up spaces would provide opportunities for outdoor music, art and informal recreation.

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

- ww) The Armada Way Scheme would improve safety by introducing new enhanced lighting which would support the night time economy and make the public feel less vulnerable;
- xx) The Scheme would provide a new CCTV system which would have significant enhancements and help address antisocial behaviour.
- yy) The Scheme directly addressed the recommendations from Violence Against Women and Girls reports, showing PCC's commitment to taking practical steps to address that important issue;
- zz) The Armada Way Scheme was not just a landscaping project, but an integrated set of proposals that would help address a much wider set of challenges the city centre faced.

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

- aaa) The Armada Way Scheme would make much needed improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure within the city centre and would meet the guidelines set for Government cycling and walking infrastructure;
- bbb) The Transforming Cities Fund was investing over £4.5 million towards the delivery of the Scheme;
- ccc) The cycling and walking scheme had widespread support and would help to achieve the existing commitments in the Joint Local Plan, to deliver sustainable transport measures for the growing city;
- ddd) The new infrastructure would enable the foundations to be laid for an expansion of city centre living with more people living and working in the city centre. Footfall for businesses would increase, vacant and historic buildings would be repurposed and this would support the commitments in the Joint Local Plan.

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

eee) Armada Way was inaccessible to those with various visual and physical impairments and in need modernisation;

fff) The inclusion of inclusive and sensory play was an integral part of the Scheme;

ggg) Work would continue with Plymouth Area Disability Action Network (PADAN) throughout the construction phases of the Scheme to ensure that consideration continued to be given to those whose needs were based on visual and physical impairments.

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) also provided additional comments on behalf of Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD):

hhh) The Armada Way Scheme would give the city centre a new dimension with the redesign encouraging a wider range of interesting active, social and cultural activities that would give local people more reason to visit the city centre;

iii) Visitors would stay longer in the city centre as there would be more to do, which would benefit existing shops;

jjj) The investments PCC were making would attract new private sector investments which would improve the retail offer further;

kkk) New shops would give local people and visitors more reason to visit the city centre and the investment would enable an upward spiral, making the city centre a vibrant and interesting place to visit.

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

lll) In February 2024 it was highlighted that housing was a top priority for Plymouth and since then the Administration set out their own ambitions for accelerating housing delivery. Plan for Homes 4 was approved in March 2024;

mmm) It was PCC's ambition to deliver a minimum of 5000 homes in five years;

nnn) The need to unlock the city centres future potential as a place people choose to live was highlighted and the focus was on the delivery of a wide range of homes which would meet housing needs as well as place making;

ooo) The Government were addressing the housing crisis as a central part of their primary mission to deliver economic growth;

ppp) Armada Way was vital to the housing ambition due to the scheme unlocking amenity space, drainage and utilities;

qqq) The play village would create local play and green space for the residents of Bretonside who didn't have that available;

rrr) The report highlighted that over 23,000 people would be within a kilometre of the new play facilities.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

sss) This was the one of the largest public realm projects in the UK and if approved, Phase 1 work would commence on 01 October 2024 which would see work begin from the Copthorne hotel to the Mayflower. Phase 2 would start on 02 February 2025 and Phase 3 would start in July 2025 with work undertaken on parts of Cornwall Street and the Sundial;

ttt) The Piazza works were delayed due to extensive works along Royal Parade.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the final construction cost for the approved Armada Way design as £29,892,665;
2. Recommend the Leader approves additions to the Capital Programme as set out in the report giving a maximum spend allocation of £29,892,665 to finance the construction of the approved Armada Way scheme;
3. Note that to support the on-going maintenance of projects within the city centre for a period of five years starting in 2025/2026 that hard and soft landscaping maintenance be funded from previously identified capital approved resources already forming part of the Capital Programme;
4. Grant authority to the Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure to take all such action as necessary to implement the project including all subsequent design amendments (excluding amendments which impact on the retention of any existing trees or the approved translocation of trees), scheme approval submissions, procurement and contract awards associated with developing and delivering the Armada Way scheme through to construction and completion, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members;
5. Delegate to the Cabinet Member for Finance authority to make any decisions which impact on the retention of any existing trees, or the approved translocation of trees associated with developing and delivering the Armada Way scheme through to construction and completion.

33. **Heat Networks Delivery Approach**

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

- a) Delivering a new Strategic Heat Network for Plymouth was a milestone in the mission to make Plymouth a Net Zero City;

- b) Heat was the largest user of energy in Plymouth and accounted for around 28% of the total city emissions. Plymouth could not become Net Zero without action to decarbonise heat;
- c) The development of heat networks was something that the council had recognised and was an objective incorporated into every climate emergency and Net Zero action plans since the Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019;
- d) Plymouth had been recognised nationally by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero as one of the 17 cities in its Advanced Zoning Programme;
- e) By using an at scale approach to the work, two separate zones were identified which offered the greatest potential for deliverable heat networks. The largest was for a Strategic Heat Main in the southern zonal area which would be around two large waste heat sources, the Southwest Water Plant and the Devonport Energy from Waste Plant;
- f) Rollout for the Strategic Heat Main would be in phases from 2026 to 2050. Phase one would include the university area, the civic quarter and Millbay. Phase two would include Derriford, the Hospital and Marjon University;
- g) Annual carbon savings with full buildout for both zones had been estimated to be 31,000 tonnes of CO₂;
- h) Recent market engagement showed strong interest from private sector heat network developers who had significant investment to deploy;
- i) PCC had met with independent legal and commercial advisors who helped identify and evaluate the different options for delivering the Strategic Heat Network;
- j) On the basis of the evaluation, which included an assessment of risk and reward, it was proposed that the best route for delivering the project was through a City Council led procurement. This option did not require any capital investment from the Council as the project could be supported in other ways, including bidding for grants from the Government's Green Heat Networking Fund;
- k) It was crucial to make sure that benefits were secured for the people of Plymouth, for example incorporating measures in the contract to ensure local employment and training opportunities for residents;
- l) The initiative would delivery ten wider benefits:
 1. Deliver over £350 million of investment in green infrastructure over a period of 20 years with the first phase commencing in 2025, involving approximately £60 million of investment;
 2. Kick-start Plymouth's most significant opportunity to decarbonise heat;
 3. Create around 400 direct green jobs and develop local capacity and green skills;

4. Provide businesses and residents with the lowest cost decarbonised heat;
 5. Enhance the city centre as a location for investment;
 6. Improve air quality by reducing harmful nitrogen oxide emissions;
 7. Improve water quality in Plymouth Sound by capturing heat from the warm waste water before it is discharged from Southwest Water Works;
 8. Improve the city's energy security by reducing the dependence on fossil fuels for meeting heat demands;
 9. Improve resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change by providing decarbonised cooling options and;
 10. Deliver long term energy cost savings for buildings, including on PCC estate;
- m) In 2023, the Labour Administration was elected under a manifesto which put green investment as one of its five key pledges. This £350 million plan was the clearest example of the environmental step change that the Administration was starting to deliver.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- n) Various cities across the UK had been operating and running heat networks successfully;
- o) The Council had gone down the procurement route to ensure their values were at the heart of the project;
- p) The Council did not have the capacity or skills to run a £100 million energy company so the opportunity was to get private companies involved to provide the capital whilst maintaining PCC's core values;
- q) The 2021 Energy Act highlighted and detailed zonal opportunities which would be part of the future of heating in large sections of the city;
- r) There were ten main industry players working in the UK, and there was a positive response from the market engagement;
- s) There were various funding streams including pension funding, which would be a 40 year plus long-term model which suited this type of infrastructure.

Cabinet agreed to:

- I. Support the zonal approach to heat network roll out in Plymouth, as set out in the report, and the procurement of a development partner to take forward these proposals to delivery;

2. Grant delegated authority to the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change, to determine the following matters in respect to the heat network delivery project:

- (a) Approval of revenue business case;
- (b) Procurement of development partner;
- (c) Submission of an application to the Green Heat Network Fund to support the delivery of the first phase of the project; and
- (d) Any other matter to secure delivery of the project, subject to such being within approved budget.

34. **Building Bridges to Opportunity Position Paper**

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

- a) In 1997 the Council approved an anti-poverty strategy and although this report was not an anti-poverty strategy, poverty had remained an important focus of the Council's activity;
- b) The position paper was focussed on developing a framework to strengthen the work that the city as a whole was doing to tackle poverty;
- c) The framework focussed on three areas:
 - 1. How would the Council stop people falling into poverty;
 - 2. If people were in poverty, how would the Council help them;
 - 3. If people were in poverty, what could the Council do to mitigate;
- d) The response to the cost of living crisis included short term 'sticking plasters' that could be used to help people at the point of crisis;
- e) Despite efforts, over 20% of children in Plymouth continued to grow up in poverty;
- f) More work was being done to help people lift themselves out of poverty and be able to earn better money, to understand health systems and how to use them, to get better jobs through better skills, to live in better housing, to enjoy culture and to have their horizons widened by the cultural offerings of the city;
- g) The position paper would help map what was already being done and identify where learning could be done. It would celebrate successes as well as identify gaps and build the framework that would bring the work into a cohesive hold across all of the

different strategies;

- h) One of the first actions of the new Prime Minister was to set up a cross departmental task force, jointly chaired by two Secretaries of State, hosted by the Cabinet Office, to look at what national Government could do to tackle child poverty;
- i) The Joseph Rowntree Foundation were also focussing on poverty;
- j) Dependant on the agreed recommendations from Cabinet, the Child Poverty Action Group would discover their full range of activity for 2025.

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) added:

- k) The work on the Position Paper was in the engagement phase which meant consulting with partners and collaborators across the city;
- l) There was more residents living in deprivation in Plymouth than the English average;
- m) Nearly a quarter of Plymouth residents were economically inactive due to various reasons including long-term sickness and people relying on lower skilled and low paid work;
- n) The goal was the build on the assets and rich cultural history that Plymouth already had, as well as pull together the economic output;
- o) Public sector organisations had been running initiatives such as Plymouth Sound National Marine Park which offered lots of opportunities not just for jobs and resources but also for green and blue spaces;
- p) Plymouth's economy was driven through marine, defence manufacturing, medical and digital industries;
- q) Building Bridges to Opportunity wanted to help set an environment where people didn't fall into poverty in the first place, where they can lift themselves out of poverty and if they were in poverty, how could PCC ensure they experience the least harm possible.

Nick Shaw (Public Health Registrar) added:

- r) Due to the complexity of it, there were no quick answers in addressing the people who lived in poverty;
- s) All poverty was multi and trans generational;
- t) The work on poverty addressed policies at a local level, including work in the Plymouth Plan around economic inactivity and poverty in the city.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Support the launch of the Building Bridges to Opportunity programme and requested that 6 monthly updates come to Cabinet;
2. Request the Leader of the Council to formally appoint a champion for this programme.

35. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Plan 2024-2030**

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

- a) Welcomed parents and carers from Mill Ford School and thanked them for their presence, understanding and the way they had worked with the Council;
- b) The plan was about every individual child and was something she was very passionate about;
- c) Her 30 year teaching background meant she was well placed to understand both the importance and the urgency for this work;
- d) There had been an increase in the city of children who had an education and health care plan (EHCP) and forecasts were expected to be on the lower side of actual numbers;
- e) Analysis indicated that Plymouth would be short of at least 105 special school places by 2030;
- f) Due to capacity pressures within the Plymouth special school estate, students had had to be placed into Independent Special Schools (ISP's);
 - i. There were 376 children and young people in ISP's with an additional estimated cost of £43,422 per year per student when compared to children placed in a school within the Plymouth school estate;
 - ii. The total cost of placing students in ISP's for financial year 2023/24 was £8.6 million;
- g) Expansion within Plymouth would ensure that more children were able to attend school closer to home which would reduce the pressure on the home to school transport service budget. Children travelling outside of the city, the costed the council £1.177 million;
- h) Plymouth City Council received funding from the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant (HMPCA) which could be used to increase the number of special educational places available in the city;
- i) There was no additional funding available, but the Council would continue to lobby Central Government and the Department for Education to request additional funds

for SEND and provision for children in Plymouth;

- j) The plan outlined a range of options to expand the special educational provision which would be delivered and funded from the available £13 million HMPCA;
- k) With no indication that provision for school age children needed to be increased at Woodlands School, available space could be turned into special provision nursery, supporting early intervention which would benefit children and their families, as well as having a cost saving;
- l) Resource provision for students within mainstream schools was integrated creating a more inclusive setting and more children would be able to stay within the schools that were within their own communities;
- m) Mill Ford School was in need of total refurbishment and full structure and condition surveys were underway to identify any underlying issues that would prevent refurbishment;
 - i. Funding to rebuild the school had been explored was not possible with existing funding;
- n) A building had become available next to Longcause School and the option to purchase was being explored, and if successful would offer up to 100 additional places subject to refurbishment;
- o) Any refurbishment works would be carefully planned to minimise disruption to students and staff;
- p) Children were the future, and it was important that they had an environment in which they could thrive;
- q) Councillor Cresswell thanked parents, school staff, and Council officers who worked so hard to deliver the best for the city's most vulnerable children.

In response to questions, supported by Lisa Linscott (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills) and Amanda Paddison (Head of Access to Learning), the following was discussed:

- r) Great inclusive practices across all schools in Plymouth would require a very strong ordinarily available approach, and graduated approach, in all schools, and the SEND sufficiency plan sat alongside this;
- s) A governance framework had been established to support the delivery of the project;
- t) A region-wide demonstration by parents and carers of SEND children had led to helpful discussions and SEND provision was a priority for the administration.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) proposed an additional recommendation which was seconded by the Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader) to:

- u) Report back to Cabinet with a plan for implementation of the SEND provision.

Cabinet agreed:

1. The SEND Sufficiency Plan 2024-2030, which set out the proposed options for expansion of special educational provision within Plymouth to meet increasing demand;
2. That a report was prepared for Cabinet with included a plan for implementation of the SEND provision.

36. **Recommissioning of Adult Care Homes**

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

- a) Good quality residential care allowed people to be well looked after in a warm and safe home, with the opportunity to socialise and stay in touch with their families;
- b) There were 89 care homes within Plymouth supporting people of a range of ages and needs;
- c) The annual spend on residential and nursing care for adults was £50 million;
- d) It was important to have a good range of high quality providers and homes to work with to give vulnerable adults, and their families, a choice of residential care;
- e) With an ageing population, demands for residential care, particularly dementia care, were likely to rise, so it was important to plan for the homes that would be needed in the future;
- f) The existing contract for residential care homes was due to expire at the end of December 2023, and the commissioning team had been working with providers to understand what was needed and how this could be achieved, and they wanted to get it right, and so were asking for an extension.

Emma Crowther (Service Director for Integrated Commissioning) and Caroline Paterson (Strategic Commissioning Manager) added:

- g) A lot had changed for residential care providers in recent years with the COVID19 pandemic, rising cost of living, and having to adapt to care for more complex needs;

- h) The existing contracts did not reflect the needs of residential care for both the present and future;
- i) The extension had been requested so that all of the learning from engagement work could be used to inform future contracts, and procurement was planned for 2025;
- j) Care home providers had been very supportive and engaging with the aim of developing a model that would support adults with complex care needs and this included:
 - i. The varying size of care homes from one bed, up to 64 beds;
 - ii. Some buildings were old and no longer fit for purpose;
 - iii. The funding model for meeting the care requirements of people with complex needs required improvement;
 - iv. Need for more staff training;
- k) Over the next 12 months, the team would work with partners to develop the work further and build stronger relationships;
- l) An X-ray car would launch in September 2024 which would be able to provide X-rays and scans within care homes, reducing the need to get residents to the hospital;
- m) The HIVE training programme would be launched to improve training and resources for providers;
- n) The team wanted to get feedback from service users;
- o) It was important to get the procurement process done well.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) proposed an amendment to recommendation two of the report so that it read:

- p) Give permission for the procurement of new contracts to proceed during 2025, with the award of contracts delegated to the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities in consultation with Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, where they would not already have authority to award within the scheme of delegation.

This amendment was agreed by Cabinet.

- q) It was discussed that the findings of the survey could be suggested to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel or Health and Wellbeing Board as a future agenda item.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the Business Case to extend the current care home contract over a period of 1 year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025;
2. Give permission for the procurement of new contracts to proceed during 2025, with the award of contracts delegated to the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities in consultation with Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, where they would not already have authority to award within the scheme of delegation.

37. **Recommendations from Scrutiny Management Board on Delt Contract**

Councillor John Stephens (Chair of Scrutiny Management Board) introduced the recommendations and said:

- a) There had been a comprehensive report and presentation from Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Sport, Leisure, HR&OD) and Pete Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager) and members of the Committee had the opportunity to ask plenty of questions on a wide range of subjects;
 - i. Governance;
 - ii. Shareholders;
 - iii. Cost comparisons to the private sector;
 - iv. Apprenticeships and generation of local skilled employment opportunities;
 - v. Innovative practice to reduce carbon footprint;
 - vi. Cyber governance and security.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) responded to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board and highlighted:

- b) The need to look at this item had been highlighted 12 months ago and elections had made it more difficult to look at;
- c) Encouraged Councillors to look at the forward plan, and to engage with Cabinet Members, over what work was coming up;
- d) Proposed an amendment to recommendation 1b as follows:
 - i. Further to reviews of the performance of the service being delivered in advance of the break clause that the Council could exercise in years 3, 5, 7

and 9 would provide greater oversight;

- ii. This was welcomed by Councillor John Stephens.

Cabinet agreed:

- I. The responses to the Scrutiny Management Board's recommendations.

38. **Delt Contract**

Cabinet agreed:

- 1. To delegate authority to renew contracts with Delt for 10 years to the Council's Section 151 Officer;
- 2. To note there are three contracts being renewed; ICT, printing and document handling, and payroll provision.

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) added the following regarding Delt's corporate social responsibility:

- a) DELT had been a real living wage employer since 2015;
- b) They were well recognised for high staff engagement and were certified as a best place to work by best companies and received a ninth place in the top 100 most loved places to work by Newsweek Magazine;
- c) Commitment to recruitment of students and apprentices, as well as upskilling existing employees through their apprenticeship programme;
- d) Strong engagement in schools, colleagues and universities and were involved in mentoring, internships and career workshops;
 - i. They had worked in depth with 23 students over the past nine years, 11 of which had returned on permanent contracts, three of which had progressed to Team Leader;
- e) They had been an Armed Forces Defence recognition scheme award winner for five years, currently silver, and on track to get gold by 2025;
 - i. 40% of their work force were ex-armed forces;
- f) They were signatories to the Care Leavers Covenant, providing employment opportunities, career mentoring and sponsorship, and one care leaver had been hired as an apprentice;
- g) They had recognition through the workplace wellbeing charter;

- h) There was an ongoing programme within the company to fundraise for local charities;
- i) They had a partnership with the Council's LGBTQ+ Staff Network;
- j) Their print and document service was carbon negative.

39. **Chair of Audit and Governance Update**

Councillor Sarah Allen (Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee) introduced the report:

- a) The report provided an overview of the Audit and Governance Committees work as defined in the Council's Constitution;
- b) Throughout 2023/24 they had focused on key areas such as internal and external audits, risk management, updates to the constitution, annual statement of accounts, annual governance statement, impact of voter identification and the Council's capitalisation directive (ensuring that the right accounting treatment was given to a transaction that saved taxpayers millions of pounds);
- c) The Committee's efforts were crucial to maintain high standards of transparency, accountability and financial integrity within the Council;
- d) The Committee remained committed to providing an independent and high level focus on audit assurance and reporting arrangements.

In response to questions the following was explained:

- e) Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) and Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) highlighted the importance of the Committee and gave their thanks to members of the Committee for their continued hard work;
- f) Polling Station reviews was a standing item;
- g) Over time, polling stations had been moved out of primary schools and into other venues to avoid closing schools;
- h) The work programme could be adjusted throughout the year to look at items of importance;
- i) The Committee would look at the legislative changes expected for local government.

40. **Ageing Well**

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

- a) Everyone was ageing, and so had a vested interest in ensuring that Plymouth provided the best environments and opportunities in which people could thrive as they moved into their later years;
- b) The Ageing Well programme was committed to changing the focus from the perceived difficulties of getting older, and instead approach with the mind-set that ageing was an opportunity, and older people were valued assets who made endless contributions to their families, neighbours and the city;
- c) Plymouth had a wonderful natural environment that enabled people to stay active, as well as a great cultural and heritage offer across diverse communities, opportunities for lifelong learning and volunteering, and a responsive service that supported people to stay well;
- d) More could be done to reduce the amount of time people spent in poor health in later life, but also to help people in poor health to lead healthy, connected and fulfilling lives;
- e) The Ageing Well programme had been based on the Centre for Ageing Better Framework for Ageing Friendly Communities, ensuring a focus on creating age friendly places and spaces and ensuring relevant and good quality work and training opportunities;
- f) The themes of the programme were distinct but were part of an integrated approach to creating conditions to age well;
- g) Residents, communities, businesses, employers and partners were invited to join Plymouth City Council in collective action.

Laura Juett (Public Health Specialist) added:

- h) Plymouth City Council had a commitment towards Age Friendly Communities, recognised the ageing population and the opportunities and challenges that it presented;
- i) In Plymouth in 2022 100,300 people were aged 50+ (37.6% of population), by 2043 110,800 people were expected to be aged 50+ (40.6% of population);
- j) Plymouth's vision was to be "One of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone: *and where age is no barrier*";
- k) The State of Ageing report would provide a picture of what it was like to age and be an older person in Plymouth, and would be presented to Cabinet in October 2024;
- l) Key themes for the programme, learned from research were:

- i. Healthy Ageing - People had said it was important to stay active and strong, but they were most concerned about poor access to health services and e-consults/digital exclusion, so work would focus on maximising potential for revamped Thrive Plymouth programme, broadening offer of falls prevention programmes and advising & influencing NHS e.g., digital first approaches and access to primary care;
- ii. Age Friendly Spaces and Places – People had said it was important to have more places to sit in public places, more accessible toilets, ‘chatty’ tables, and bus shelters with seats, so work would focus on supporting adoption of Age-Friendly Businesses framework, embed Healthy Streets framework into our planning/design, promotion of the Climate Ambassador Programme to 50+;
- iii. Transport - People described struggling to use the bus as the bus stops are far away/on a hill, community transport options were expensive and unreliable, so work would focus on supporting the delivery of the Plymouth Bus Service Improvement Plan and ensuring that the views of older people were central to developments, promoted active travel for over 50s, and supported conversations towards improvements in community transport for older people;
- iv. Participation and Inclusion - people talked about *‘having company is the most important thing’* and they wanted more opportunities *‘for people to talk to us face to face’*, so work would focus on supporting the Centre for Ageing Better Age Without Limits campaign that challenged ageism and supported a more age-inclusive society, working with the Community Empowerment Team to ensure that the experiences and strengths of older people were amplified and used to inform collective action;
- v. Skills, Employment and Volunteering - People had said that employers need recruit based on skills/experience not age and they wanted more flexible retirement options and more diverse volunteering opportunities, and so work would focus on promotion of the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, On Course South West and other training providers to promote and developing learning opportunities for people aged 50+, as well as promoting volunteering opportunities for people aged 50+;
- vi. Housing – People had said that they needed more accessible and innovative housing options such as house shares, co-ops and intergeneration living, and so work in this area would focus on existing housing partnerships making the case for an adequate range of housing options and adaptations for people as they age, work with energy delivery partners to promote and improve the uptake of Home Upgrade Grants to insulate homes and improve energy self-sufficiency among those aged 50+;
- vii. Communication - People had stressed the importance of recognising and giving value to older people’s histories and experiences. They said that language was really important and needed to convey respect. Work would focus on ensuring all consultation and engagement processes were

accessible to older people, challenged negative stereotypes of ageing and older people, actively recognised and celebrated the diversity of ageing and older people in communications.

m) International Day of Older People would be on 1 October 2024;

- i. Launch of PCC Ageing Well Hub – bringing together information and resources organised around specific themes;
- ii. Memory Matters Hub - Information and Advice Fair for over 50s (includes legal advice, benefits and pension credit advice, health improvement advice);
- iii. Volunteering Fair focused on promoting/recruiting to over 50's at The Box;
- iv. Theatre Royal - Elder Tree and Theatre Royal drama and seated dance workshop;
- v. Red Velvet Cinema showing at Devonport Guildhall;
- vi. Silver Swans Free Dance Workshops;
- vii. Plymouth Active Leisure – 19 free sessions – gentle swims, 'try bowls', netball, climbing;
- viii. Promoting wide range of existing groups/sessions opportunities across the week including activities in libraries, On Course South West, Home Upgrade Grants, Connect Plymouth – Electric Car Club and Beryl E-bikes, Plymotion – led walks and bikes rides and adult cycle training;

n) Communications about the programme would begin within the next week.

41. **Children's Services Update**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the item:

- a) The report laid out the challenges that the Council faced in relation to Children's Services, particularly placements, also being faced by many other local authorities across the country;
- b) It captured the financial context, challenges and strategic efforts to address the needs of children in Plymouth;
- c) The budget for young people and families was £60.334 million, with £36.725 million allocated for placement costs, but as of June 2024, the forecast expenditure for placements was £41.417 million, largely due to the higher than expected number of children in care;

- d) There were 521 children in care, 33 more than had been budgeted for, and there were more children in external residential placements and unregistered placements than anticipated;
- e) The average cost of a residential placement was £6,182 per week, but for children with complex needs, this could rise to £16,000 per week, and some placements were costing over £40,000 per week;
- f) Finding suitable foster placements for children remained a challenge;
- g) The Council had prevented 55 children from entering care in recent months, and had supported nine more to return home;
- h) The Family Homes for Children programme was focusing on recruiting more in-house foster carers to reduce reliance on expensive external placements, and had identified £1.53 million of potential savings for the 2024/25 financial year, with just over £500,000 already achieved through positive placement moves;
- i) Children's Services continued to strengthen in-house fostering, exploring options for directly providing children's residential care, as well as supporting the reunification of children with their birth families where safe and possible;
- j) The Council had little to no bargaining power in relation to the cost of a lot of placements;
- k) She would be speaking to government to lobby for much needed changes to the sector;
- l) People should be shocked at the stark reality of how the market had developed in the past ten years, when remembering this was in relation to looking after the most vulnerable people in society.

Temilola Salimon (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) added:

- m) Residential arrangements were being reviewed weekly;
- n) Locally and residentially foster carer numbers were low, and this was trying to be understood.

In response to questions, supported by David Haley (Director of Children's Services), it was added:

- o) Foster carers coming forward didn't have the experience or confidence to home children with challenging emotional needs and/or trauma;
- p) A good financial package was offered to foster carers;

- q) Phase two of the outcomes of the fostering summit would include looking at how to do fostering differently;
- r) Work on increasing foster carers was beginning to show increases in people going through the process of becoming foster carers;
- s) There were realistic challenges, but the Council was in the right places trying to improve the situation;
- t) Evidence that work within early intervention and prevention, as well as alignment of resources in family hubs was starting to have an impact on reducing the level of care families required.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- u) Intervention from government on cost of care was required and he would take these issues to the LGA and other forums;
- v) Every time Children's Services budget was allowed to grow, it deprived other areas of the Council from being able to do their work;

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

- w) The service was relentlessly looking at ways to tackle financial pressure and reports would continue to come to Cabinet to be open and transparent about the issue.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

42. **Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) made the following announcements:

- a) The Daily Telegraph had named Plymouth the best city to live and work in;
- b) Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) would be giving the civic welcome speak at a conference on floating offshore wind;

He then invited Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) to repeat information on the Armada Way Project dates following a misleading headline from BBC Spotlight on the item:

- c) Zone One, from the Copthorne Hotel to Mayflower Street, work would take place from 1 October 2024 to July 2025;
- d) Zone Two construction would take place between February 2025 and November 2025;

- e) Zone Three construction would take place between July 2025 and April 2026;
- f) Zone Four timeframe was to be confirmed due to works planned on Royal Parade, but would be within the timeframe of the other Zones.

43. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria) made the following announcement:

- a) Seafest would be taking place on the Barbican Waterfront on 14 and 15 September 2024 with free shuttle buses and lots of free activities.

44. **LGA Update**

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

- a) Expressed congratulations to Councillor Shaun Davies, who stepped down as LGA Chair after being elected as the new MP for Telford;
- b) Elected officers of the LGA Labour Group had unanimously nominated Councillor Louise Gittins as the new LGA Chair;
- c) The LGA Labour Group had five regional member peers who led support directly to councils and co-ordinated support from a wide pool of Labour member peers with expertise in different areas;
 - i. Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) had been appointed as member peer for the South West region having previously served as a member peer for the East Midlands;
- d) Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) had been elected as a Labour Group regional representative for the South West;
- e) Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) was reappointed as a member of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board;
- f) The annual LGA conference would be held at the Harrogate Convention Centre 22-24 October 2024.

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