

Cabinet

Monday 10 February 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Also in attendance: Councillor John Stephens (Chair of Scrutiny Management Board), Liz Bryant (Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal Services), Emma Crowther (Service Director for Integrated Commissioning), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Helen Slater (Lead Accountancy Manager) and, Oliver Woodhams (Head of Finance).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.45 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.

94. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

95. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held 13 January 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

96. **Questions from the Public**

There was one question from a member of the public.

The following question was asked by Jillian Oxley	
<p>Question: Evidence of appropriate assessment, including local consultation with residents, should be made for each bus shelter location prior to installation.</p> <p>When will Plymouth’s new bus shelters be fixed to align with DfT Inclusive Mobility guidance, ensuring they meet the needs of all residents at each shelter location?”</p>	<p>Response: The Plymouth Bus Shelter Replacement Programme, which is now substantially complete, has seen the introduction of brand-new modern shelters across the whole of Plymouth.</p> <p>The bus shelters are provided by our new bus shelter contractor, Clear Channel UK Limited, who own and maintain the assets at no cost to the council.</p>

	<p>The new shelters have better lighting, improved seating and relocated real-time information to make it easier for passengers to view, all in accordance with the guidance set out within the Department for Transport's Inclusive Mobility guide^[1], with some shelters also installed with 'living roofs' to help make the area greener, healthier and more biodiverse. In addition, 220 of the bus shelters have solar panels.</p> <p>Across Plymouth there are a number of bus shelter configurations, with the type of shelter at each location determined by site specific factors such as the space available on the footway and the location of underground utilities and services.</p> <p>When installing the new shelters, the starting point for the specification was to replicate the old configurations as far as practicable. However, given changes in legislation since the previous contract was awarded in 1999, this has not been possible at every site. This is because space needs to be allowed, both within and around each shelter, for wheelchair access wherever possible (again aligning with the Department of Transport guidance). The new shelters need to be bigger to accommodate these accessibility requirements: hence changes have been required at some locations.</p> <p>With regard to the bus shelter locations, it was clear through the tendering process for the new contract that Plymouth historically had a large number of bus shelters for its size. At the time of tendering for the new contract, all companies expressing an interest advised the council that Plymouth had too many shelters and that any bid would be based on a reduction in the overall number of shelters, for a commercially viable contract to be delivered at no cost to</p>
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	<p>the council. There was however a commitment to not remove any bus stops. The decision on which shelters would not be replaced was not taken lightly. The process was data-led and based on the recommendations of the cross-party Bus Shelters Advisory Group who analysed every single site against set criteria, including service levels, usage of the shelters and the proximity of other shelters, in order to minimise the impact on as many bus passengers as possible.</p> <p>[1] Inclusive Mobility. A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure</p>
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97. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

98. **Budget Scrutiny Recommendations**

Councillor Stephens (Chair of Scrutiny Management Board) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) On 21 and 22 January 2025 the Scrutiny Management Board undertook a detailed examination of the Council's budget proposals for 2025/26, focussing on both immediate pressures and long term sustainability;
- b) There were 19 recommendations which reflected several key priorities ensuring robust financial management, protecting essential services and maintaining support for Plymouth's most vulnerable residents;
- c) The Scrutiny Management Board had paid particular attention to areas which were experiencing significant cost pressure, including Adult Social Care and Children's Services where sustainable demand management approaches had been identified;
- d) The Scrutiny Management Board had focussed on risk management and financial resilience;
- e) The recommendations regarding working balances and Reserve Strategy aimed to ensure the Council maintained adequate financial buffers whilst reducing reliance on one-off resources;
- f) Cabinet had responded positively to the recommendations and had accepted the majority outright. Where recommendations had been partially agreed and the

Scrutiny Management Board welcomed the constructive dialogue regarding implementation, time-scales and practical considerations;

- g) The recommendations regarding service accessibility, including support for residents who weren't digitally abled, and the proposed council tax scheme for service personnel demonstrated the Council's commitment to ensuring Council Services remained accessible to all residents;
- h) The Scrutiny Management Board would continue to monitor progress of the recommendations through their work programmes and those of the four scrutiny panels, particularly in areas such as homelessness services, SEND support and the Capital Programme.

Cabinet agreed to note the recommendations from the Scrutiny Management Board.

99. **Cabinet Response to Budget Scrutiny Recommendations**

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

- a) Recommendation number one: the Section 151 Officer would undertake a comprehensive review of the Working Balances Threshold using Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice guidance and comparisons to the Council's statistical neighbours to determine if the 5% remained appropriate given the current risks. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- b) Recommendation number two: subject to the advice of the Section 151 Office, Cabinet would prepare a detailed plan to rebuild the reserves within two years to provide an adequate buffer against financial risks whilst implementing a clear strategy to reduce the Council's reliance upon the use of one-off resources and reserves. This recommendation was partially agreed by Cabinet, subject to the findings from recommendation number one and that the required time scale might need to be extended to cover the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) rather than the two years set out in the recommendation;
- c) Recommendation number three: Cabinet would update the comprehensive Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) when the multi-year settlements were agreed and would submit to scrutiny for consideration before the Council would take a final decision. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- d) Recommendation number four: all significant Capital schemes would have a detailed risk assessment on the impact of further interest rate changes on scheme viability before proceeding. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- e) Recommendation number five: Cabinet would consider a council tax discount scheme for service personnel who were deployed for more than six months, similar to single person discount. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed', however this would be subject to further consideration with information on the criteria from the Scrutiny Management Board. Any amendments would be an

additional financial burden and would be subject to a public consultation;

- f) Recommendation number six: six monthly updates would be provided to the relevant scrutiny panels on the delivery of planned savings within the homelessness service, where the £724,000 additional funding had been required. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- g) Recommendation number seven: planned works to bring together the Asset Management Plan would be considered at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board and an asset register would be provided for this purpose. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- h) Recommendation number eight: the Council should develop a comprehensive communication strategy to inform residents who were not digitally able about the face-to-face services offered, including service locations, operating hours and this should be distributed through non-digital channels, with primary distribution through the annual council tax bill.

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

- i) Recommendation eight had been partially agreed. There was already prioritised support for residents who were not digitally able including:
 - i. A digital assistance telephone line;
 - ii. Bookable appointments at the Central Library, Plymstock Library, Plympton Library and St Budeaux Library;
- j) Work was being carried out with the digital exclusion team to work with health and well-being hubs and Community Builders;
- k) This information would not be distributed through the council tax bill as it was not a universal service which the general public could access. This was targeted support and if this was more generalised there would not be the staff resources to support those who were genuinely digitally excluded.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) continued:

- l) Recommendation number nine: Cabinet would consider what additional funding may be made available to commemorate Victory in Europe and Victory over Japan day. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed' subject to any potential financial implications;
- m) Recommendation number 10: clear communication should be in place to ensure residents were aware that direct cremations were available at the park crematorium. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- n) Recommendation number 11: Cabinet would review the effectiveness and sustainability of demand management approaches within the adult social care given

the £12 million of additional cost that had been identified. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';

- o) Recommendation number 12: the relevant Cabinet Member would work with DELT Shared Services to ensure that internet connectivity was consistent across the Plymouth City Council (PCC) estate, particularly in libraries to enable residents to gain access to online services.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) added to recommendation 12:

- p) DELT Shared Services were working closely with the library service to modernise their equipment, including chip and pin being available in the library;
- q) There was a priority on offering remote services within libraries so residents could become more digital and have better access to Council services.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) continued:

- r) Recommendation number 13: the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel would undertake a review of the works undertaken by the Dental Task Force. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- s) Recommendation number 14: the additional funding to process the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) was welcomed and a regular update on progress against this backlog would be provided to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- t) Recommendation number 15: Cabinet would review the funding model for SEND transport to determine a sustainable long-term solution, including consideration of independent travel training programmes where appropriate. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed'.

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) added to recommendation number 15:

- u) The recommendation was welcomed and there was already travel training in place. The work on this would continue to ensure the training was reaching as many parents and young people as possible to highlight not just the financial advantages but also the advantages of independence.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) continued:

- v) Recommendation number 16: A letter would be written to Government requesting a review of the criteria in relation to home to school transport. Such a review would consider whether receipt of mobility vehicles or higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance or personal independent payments could be included in the local authority's assessment of transport. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';

- w) Recommendation number 17: Cabinet would review the effectiveness and sustainability of demand management approaches within Children's Services given the £19 million of additional costs identified and further accelerated the use of Council assets in the approach to reduce demand on high costs placements. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed'. This recommendation would also be referred to in the budget;
- x) Recommendation number 18: The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships would establish a robust monitoring framework to oversee the SEND capital programme, ensuring clear accountability for project milestones. Progress with this would form regular reports to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel. The Cabinet response to this recommendation was 'agreed';
- y) Recommendation number 19: The Leader of the Council would write to the Government to request that notification of the Public Health Grant was received before the 31 December 2025 to enable adequate planning in the new year's budget.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- z) There was an uplift in the Public Health Grant this year and thanks were given to the Minister responsible for this;
- aa) There were changes from Government whereby funding would be granted through needs basis;
- bb) There would be more information about how the Grant would be distributed once the comprehensive spending review was reported.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) continued:

- cc) Thanks were given to the Scrutiny Management Board for their thorough review of the budget and the time and effort that went into producing detailed recommendations.

Cabinet agreed to the recommendations and responses.

100. **Proposed Capital and Revenue Budget 2025/26**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) This was the first time in 14 years where the Council had seen an uplift in financial support received from Government in terms of the Revenue Support Grant;
- b) Resources for Local Government had been reduced by the previous Government;
- c) The comprehensive review was a recognition of the pivotal role that Local Government played in the delivery of Public Services including, but not limited to:

- i) Working with the health service on prevention;
 - ii) The care of vulnerable children;
 - iii) The well-being of vulnerable adults;
 - iv) Collection of bins and filling in of potholes;
- d) There were clear signals from Government that the role was Local Government and the need for repair to local finances was understood;
- e) Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution were in the pipeline which may lead to new structures. This would place additional time demands on the Chief Executive and senior staff members;
- f) Plymouth City Council (PCC) had asked the Government for exceptional financial support but not for additional money;
- g) Although PCC were challenged financially, much like other local authorities, the budget placed the Council in a strong and balanced position;
- h) The budget reinforced Plymouth's pre-eminence in the region with regards to delivery of services and support given to partners in the private sector;
- i) Although economic development was not a statutory function, it was a function that PCC exercised to ensure growth happened. This work within the budget would support the creation of 8,000 jobs;
- j) Works from PCC included:
- i) The Freeport investment;
 - ii) The Innovation Bars at OceansGate;
 - iii) Investment into the National Marine Park (NMP);
 - iv) Investment into the remaking of the peninsula at Plymstock;
 - v) The Brickfields regeneration;
- k) PCC would continue to ask the Government for resources as there was ambition for the city and Plymouth was a significant deliverer of growth for the country.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- l) Even through financial challenges, PCC was able to offer a balanced budget;

- m) The budget would be taken to City Council on 24 February 2025 to give every Councillor the opportunity to fully consider it;
- n) The budget was being predominantly spent on the provision of adult social care, children's social care, providing support to people in homelessness and children's special educational needs. In excess of 75% of the 2023/24 budget was spent on the provision of those services and subject to final sign off, this budget would have 83% spent on those provisions;
- o) The following additions had been made within the budget:
 - i) An additional £12 million had been allocated for adult social care;
 - ii) £724,000 had been additionally allocated for homelessness and emergency bed and breakfasts;
 - iii) Children's Social Care and home to school transport had been allocated an additional £19 million;
- p) There was an increased allocation of £13.3 million from the Government;
- q) The additional cost pressures and adjustments required totalled over £50 million. These were offset by Government grants;
- r) This was a positive budget and it was highlighted that PCC would not be closing libraries, there was an increase allocation of net zero budgets to reinforce that commitments and additional money had been allocated for demand lead services;
- s) Additional commitments to Plymouth Active Leisure were confirmed, with increased funding being allocated.

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

- t) There were continued investments in Brickfields and Foulston Park;
- u) Plymouth Active Leisure had increased the amount of people using the Life Centre;
- v) PCC had helped the Life Centre invest nearly £500,000 into their gym equipment which had driven up membership by 6%;
- w) There would be an open weekend on 14 March 2025 at Foulston Park to celebrate the opening of the new health and well-being hub.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) continued:

- x) The budget papers did not reflect any financial provision for the cost of undertaking the referendum for a directly elected Mayor in Plymouth for which a petition had been received. The Risk Register stated that this would have significant risk and the financial implications arising from the call for a referendum of a directly elected

Mayor and any resulting election without the mitigation being contingency funded would have to be identified;

- y) The cost in 2025/26 of holding a referendum would be £410,000 and the only contingency funds available were through the working balances and although the petition had yet to be validated, it was likely that PCC would need to budget for this cost;
- z) PCC had been criticised by their external auditors for the level of reserves available and although work had been put in to increasing this amount over the past few years, the cost of the referendum would immediately impact those reserves;
- aa) Proposed the following recommendation: That Cabinet recommended a revenue budget for 2025/26 to the sum of £253,008 million to City Council subject to a further draw down of £410,000 from the working balances in 2025/26 to cover the cost of the referendum for a directly elected Mayor resulting from the receipt of a petition to that effect should the proper officer agree a valid petition has been received.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- bb) The money to run the referendum had to be found, and there was no choice but to take the money from the working balances as otherwise it would have to be drawn from other essential resources such as grass cutting or the Theatre Royal’;
- cc) Although it might be an interesting debate, there would be no money from Government to fund a directly elected Mayor, nor their office and therefore running this would be in addition to the existing cost of running the Council;
- dd) Having a directly elected Mayor would not reduce the number of Councillors, nor the need for a Cabinet.

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

- ee) A proposed amendment: Subject to Cabinet agreeing item nine on the agenda that the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee Revenue Budget and Capital Programme and 2025/26 Business Plan would be included within the final budget for Council’s approval.

Helen Slater (Lead Accountancy Manager) added:

- ff) It was a strong position to be able to bring a balanced budget to the new year without any financial support from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);
- gg) Although there had been significant budget allocations to support pressures in children’s social care and home to school transport, this level of investment was not sustainable long term;
- hh) Any amendments agreed would be reflected in the final budget report.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) added:

- ii) The MTFP would accompany the final report to Full Council.

Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note that this proposed budget has been based on the Letter of Assurance received in February 2024 from MHCLG (DLUHC as was), in reference to the accounting treatment of the Council's pension arrears in 2019/20;
2. Note the Financial Risks as set out in Appendix 7;
3. Note the section from the Council's Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the level of reserves;
4. Note that the Fire and Police Council Tax precepts would not be confirmed until after the Cabinet meeting and delegated to the Section 151 Officer to make final amendments to Council Tax Resolution, to include Fire and Police precepts, prior to City Council;
5. Recommend the following to City Council, subject to amendments by the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader reflecting any final technical adjustments and changes upon receipt of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement;
 - a. The Revenue Budget 2025/26 £253.008m;
 - b. The drawdown of a maximum of £2.088m of flexible capital receipts, as set out in the report;
 - c. The Capital Budget 2025/26 £395.864m;
 - d. The Capital Financing Strategy 2025/26;
 - e. The Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 (incorporating the Non-Treasury Management Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement).

101. **Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2025-2026 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme**

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

- a) The joint Chairs of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee and relevant portfolio holders of both authorities were continuing to lobby Government, who had the ability to apply Retail Price Index (RPI) to bridge tolls. This was being progressed with the support of local MPs to seek a long-term package of financial

support for the Tamar Bridge;

- b) Tamar 2050 had been introduced in February 2024 to provide a more robust agenda for the future aspirations regarding the Tamar crossing and would provide more traction regarding Government support in the future.

Cabinet agreed:

1. That the 2025/26 revenue estimated and capital programme and the draft 2025-26 Business plan, as set out in the appendices to the JC Report, be approved;
2. Note the longer-term forecast to 2028/29.

102. **Finance and Capital Monitoring report**

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

- a) Whilst there was a forecast variance of £1.842 million against the budget for month nine, this was a reasonably acceptable figure to give assurance that at the end of the financial year, PCC would be able to balance the books;
- b) Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, homelessness and the provision of SEND were areas in which the Council was experiencing a significant increase in demand, resulting in financial pressure;
- c) Transformational change would be critically important in the next financial year to deal with and address the long-term pressures that existed;
- d) The report included the Capital Programme where there was an increase of £24 million. This figure was incorporated into the budget documentation;

Cabinet agreed:

1. The forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 9 as set out in the report with an adverse variance of £1.842m;
2. Senior Officers would continue to work with Cabinet to reduce the forecast overspend;
3. The Capital Budget 2024-2029 was revised to £395.864.

103. **Children's Services update (To Follow)**

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

- a) The past year had been a challenging time for Council spend on placements for children in care;
- b) National pressures had had an impact, leading to a significant increase in the cost of care for children;
- c) As a result of a shortage of foster carers nationally, more children were having to be placed in high-cost residential children's homes and a small number of children, two in Plymouth, were experiencing high-cost unregulated placements;
- d) Many of Plymouth's children in care were experiencing stable family placements with foster carers in Plymouth at a lower cost, however to be able to reduce spend significantly, the number of children experiencing residential care needed to be reduced by recruiting more foster carers and supporting them to be able to meet the needs of the children;
- e) The Family Homes for Plymouth Children was a comprehensive programme of work to ensure children in care had access to a home that met their needs from the instance they came into PCC's care;
- f) Foster for Plymouth was recruiting more foster carers by being part of the Southwest Hub and was supporting carers better, including through the first 'Mockingbird' model this year;
- g) The Mockingbird Hub was created by foster carer Jo and her husband Duncan, embodying the mentality of 'it takes a village to raise a child'. There were 10 families within the 'constellation' in which 18 children were living. There had been no breakdowns in any placements and it was a nurturing and supportive environment;
- h) A second 'constellation' would be started later in 2025, which two more planned;
- i) The Foster Care Summit, which took place recently at Dartmoor Zoo, provided encouraging feedback in that, due to the Council changing and shaping their offer to reflect previous feedback, there had been no repetition in said feedback;
- j) There had been some progress on the programme of work to support PCC's children to move from residential care to family, however that ambition was impacted by the national shortage of fostering placements;
- k) There was also good progress in improving support to kinships and special guardianship carers to ensure children could remain within their own family networks;
- l) PCC's first children's home was on track to open later in 2025. This would mitigate children being placed in high cost care a long way from Plymouth and further homes would follow;
- m) A clear plan was in place to ensure that when it was safe for them to do so, children were supported in their return from care back to their families.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

104. **LGR/ Devolution Update**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The Devolution White Paper set out a vision for strategic authorities to be the norm across England with a view to aiding strategic purposes such as transport, economic development and environmental works;
- b) This required top-tier authorities in particular to come together in combined authorities;
- c) Combined authorities were not merged authorities. The authorities would stay as they were but would work collaboratively to ensure the dispersal of money and power to their constituent authorities;
- d) The Government required these strategic authorities to have directly elected Mayors, with the public in their area casting a vote;
- e) The Devolution White Paper also included the reorganisation of Local Government. Since 1974 there had been a system of Government with County Councils (top-tier authorities) who supported transport, children's social services and adult social services. Underneath that were District Councils who delivered the remaining services;
- f) There were also Unitary Authorities (such as PCC) who were responsible for all functions;
- g) The Government were requesting all Council's fall under Unitary Authorities which would mean boundary changes as Unitary Authorities had to be of a sufficient size to ensure they were financially stable, viable and sustainable;
- h) PCC had received a letter from Jim McMahon (Local Government Minister) inviting all authorities to propose new Unitary Authorities within Devon;
- i) Due to Plymouth's size (population of 267,000) there would potentially be a need to increase the city's size in order to get Government approval to continue as a Unitary Authority;
- j) The key principles were sustainable, high-quality services whilst preserving the local identity;
- k) PCC were committed to ensuring that any changes would enhance, not diminish, local service delivery, would maintain a strong connection with local communities and would create a structure which was both financially sustainable and operationally efficient;

- l) The initial proposal for Plymouth would need to be prepared by the 21 March 2025;
- m) Feedback from partners and residents was being collated to ensure PCC could incorporate this into their proposition;
- n) Previous Government had tried to implement a similar proposition under a 'Level-Two Deal' in which Plymouth would have joined forces with Devon County Council and Torbay Council. This did not happen;
- o) Cornwall Council had denied working with Plymouth, however it was agreed that a Southwest peninsular Strategic Authority would be the best way forward.

105. **Leader's Announcements**

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

- a) Plymouth Argyle Football Club (PAFC) beat Liverpool Football Club and the Leader would write a letter to Simon Hallett (Chairman of PAFC) and Andrew Parkinson (Executive Director of PAFC) praising the decision to bring in a new manager as a clear transformation was underway at Home Park;
- b) PAFC was as bigger part of the city as any institution and what they achieved for the city was immeasurable;
- c) Thanks were given to all players.

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

- d) There was a major fire at The Barrow Centre at Mount Edgumbe and although nobody was harmed, two staff members lost their homes and two holiday lets were destroyed;
- e) The fire started in a member of staff's residence and moved through the roof space of the adjacent properties and due to the efforts of the fire brigade, it was prevented from spreading to the rest of The Barrow Centre;
- f) The site had been made safe and in the coming weeks consolidation works and power restoration would be carried out with a hope for the café and businesses to be open in time for February half term;
- g) The wider park remained open as usual;
- h) Thanks were given to the fire fighters, Mount Edgumbe staff and business staff who had pulled together in response to the fire;
- i) Counselling had been made available to all staff and the local community had responded with kindness and practical help.

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

- j) The fire took 40 firefighters to control and extinguish and had had a devastating effect on residents and businesses;
- k) Councillor Kate Ewert (Co-Chair of the Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee) had assisted in coordinating the community response;
- l) There had been Crowdfunding set up by the local community as well as clothes donated to those who had lost their possessions;
- m) PCC would be involved in the rebuilding process and weekly meetings had been set up to look at what would come next and how support could continue to everybody involved.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- a) Cornwall was taking the lead on the capital rebuild;
- b) Thanks were given again to the staff and the fire service for going the extra mile.

106. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) Thanks were given to The Box staff who ensured Smeaton's Tower was lit up green to celebrate the win against Liverpool Football Club;
- b) There were close to 2000 visitors to The Box for John Lyons exhibition 'Carnavalesque' official opening;
- c) There had been a poetry event at The Box which included a conversation between Osman Yousefzada and Ekow Eshun;
- d) Sir Joshua Reynolds 'Portrait of Omai' would be going on a National Gallery tour and The Box was one of only three place to exhibit this;
- e) In 2026, Steve McQueen's film 'Grenfell' would be shown at The Box;
- f) There were plans to launch two new locations to offer e-sports. E-sports allowed players or teams to compete in various games up to professional levels and had evolved from casual gaming to an industry with global tournaments, sponsorships and a wide variety of employment opportunities;
- g) Efford and Honicknowle Youth and Community Centres were undergoing significant redevelopment to reinvigorate and reimagine them and this would be where the e-sports facilities would be hosted;

- h) The plans included 20 new gaming stations and a number of FI approved raving simulations;
- i) PCC's ambition was to provide an inclusive, enjoyable, safe and enhanced service to young people in the community.

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

- j) The Armada Way project running to schedule, on programme and on budget.

107. **LGA Update**

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

- a) Himself, Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) and Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) had attended the Local Government Association (LGA) Labour Conference;
- b) The LGA had been tracking the changes with Local Government Reform, Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution;
- c) Councillor Louise Gittings (Chair of the LGA) had welcomed the fast-track Devolution proposals and the Government's decision to postpone some local elections;
- d) The LGA were offering Councils support on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation issues including a new Devolution Hub;
- e) Wes Streeting (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) had launched the Government's 10 year NHS Plan which highlighted the local authorities role in health and prevention;
- f) A 'Building Fairer Towns, Cities and regions' report had been produced by the LGA.

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