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Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 7 December 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Viney, in the Chair.
Councillor Coker, Vice Chair.
Councillors Ball and Roberts.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Martin Leaves and Mrs Nelder

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.32 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee 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.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made in accordance with the Code of Conduct in relation to an item under discussion at this meeting –

Name	Agenda item and subject.	Reason	Interest
Councillor Wildy	6. Worklessness: The Contribution and Role of Plymouth City Council.	She is on the local management board of working links	Personal

34. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

35. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business

36. FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Business Manager for Development and Regeneration informed the Panel that the Management Board had requested that all Panels incorporate into their work programme feedback on corporate improvement priorities; this had been included in the agenda under item 8 where slippage on CIP 11 had been identified.

37. WORKLESSNESS: THE CONTRIBUTION AND ROLE OF PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Several representatives from different organisations and sectors of the Council namely, Strategic Housing, Social Inclusion, Recruitment and the Shekinah Mission provided the Panel with presentations upon the issue of worklessness in Plymouth.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) homelessness and unemployment were strongly linked to rates of unemployment; figures were very high among single homeless, young homeless people and homeless families;
- (ii) many people who experienced homelessness or who were rough sleepers had low levels of qualifications, and many had none at all; many homeless people also had a

history of offending, mental health issues, substance abuse and domestic violence which resulted in multiple barriers to get into the workplace;

- (iii) Plymouth Sustainable Employment Programme (PSET) was a unique pilot project funded by the CLG (Communities and Local Government Department) in order to explore how to support entrenched rough sleepers and homeless people in hostels to access training and employment;
- (iv) PSET provided greater opportunities to reach challenges in the labour market; this initiative was run by the Shekinah Mission to support homeless people back into employment;
- (v) PSET enabled skilled workers to engage with 12 hard to reach individuals in Plymouth and move them into sustainable employment;
- (vi) PSET provided an inclusive programme for people excluded from mainstream society and employment;
- (vii) pre employment training was included in the PSET programme and was integral to an individual's personal development as it provided help with literacy and numeracy and allowed individuals to become more stable before going into employment;
- (viii) Shekinah trading had a model of engagement in which work experience was provided for two weeks to individuals to help them move into employment;
- (ix) the PSET pilot programme was due to finish in February 2010;
- (x) the PSET pilot programme was highlighted as being a flagship for employability;
- (xi) every homeless person out of work amounted to an annual sum of £7,758 in welfare benefit payments, £1,341 in income tax and national insurance payments and £12,000 in lost economic output; it was also estimated that if factors such as temporary accommodation, unemployment, and the cost of health services, criminal justice services and support were taken into account the annual cost to taxpayers of each homeless person could be as much as £50,000;
- (xii) the financial inclusion unit had received an award for 'Best Practice' nationally and was nominated as 'Council Partner of the Year' due to its work with money advice services;
- (xiii) the financial inclusion unit had formed a questionnaire in order to determine the barriers to unemployed individuals; the results showed childcare, low wages and debt were the 3 main factors;
- (xiv) tax credits were a great way to supplement low wages as in some cases it could double an individual's income;
- (xv) it was important for a lead to be identified for the issue of worklessness so that a coordinated approach could be maintained;
- (xvi) Plymouth City Council was a popular local employer as evidence showed that people in the local area wanted to work for the Council;
- (xvii) Plymouth City Council demonstrated best practice in encouraging people from all sectors of the community to apply for vacancies;
- (xviii) 4.23% of all staff at the Council were from an ethnic minority group;
- (xix) Plymouth City Council had 20% of the population aged 18 to 29 and 19.75% of the working population under the age of 31;

- (xx) the Council currently had the following general initiatives, New Deal, Local Employer Partnership (LEP), Staff Learning and Development and Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service;
- (xxi) Plymouth City Council offered a 'Guaranteed Job Interview' for applicants self-assessed as having a disability who also met the short listing criteria;
- (xxii) the Council were offering work experience for people with learning difficulties;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (xxiii) it would cost approximately £1000 per person in order to support the PSET programme; these funds would provide pre employment training and on going support whilst in employment;
- (xxiv) the PSET pilot programme received great support from the following council departments, Customers Services, Car parks and Maintenance;
- (xxv) the PSET pilot programme required additional funding in order to continue its work;
- (xxvi) £50,000 was required in order to allow the programme to continue for another year;
- (xxvii) the PSET programme looked at early intervention in order to put processes and mechanisms in place to help with potential problems with rent, bills and transportation;
- (xxviii) the average wage in Plymouth was £23,000;

The following recommendations were agreed;

a) Tackling Worklessness is essential to the City meeting the objectives set out in the Local Economic Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy, Children & Young People's Plan as well as a range of other targets. Whilst it is recognised that Worklessness impacts in many aspects of the Council and partnership's work e.g. health, learning etc ultimately it demands a lead service area and can best be addressed from a Strategic Economic Development perspective

Recommendation: That the Department for Development & Regeneration take on the ownership and leadership of the Worklessness agenda on behalf of the Council and that links across Plymouth City Council are accordingly established to a) ensure the councils role is clearly understood and b) that from an Economic Development perspective that skills development aligns with the economic drivers of the city and key sectors

b) The present framework with central and local government and the third sector is too complicated. The emerging consensus in national policy, endorsed by Overview & Scrutiny is that operationally Worklessness is best led by the Local Authority, under the strategic direction of the LSP

Recommendation: that Plymouth City Council take on a leadership role

c) The Children & Young People OSP will be aware of the Skills and NEETS agenda. The Growth & Prosperity OSP recommends that PCC reviews its Recruitment policies to become an exemplar employing body, by providing greater employment/work opportunities for disengaged groups eg young people, care leavers, young offenders and the longer term unemployed

Recommendation: That HR work with Assistant Director Economic Dev and his team to develop a strategy for Plymouth City Council recruitment under the Worklessness agenda and that CMT endorse this.

38. **DESTINATION SOUTH WEST**

The Business Manager for Development and Regeneration informed the panel that Destination South West was a tracking resolution from a previous meeting in which it was highlighted that currently there was no councillor representation on the board. At 26 October 2009 meeting the panel was advised that the Director of DSW was happy to attend a future meeting, however it was resolved that the Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration (Economic Development) would attend the Panel first in order to provide an update.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) Destination South West was established more than five years previously in which £1000 was funded each year;
- (ii) the aim was to promote Destination South West around the world;
- (iii) Plymouth did not have a deep water mooring that was not owned by the Military of Defence;
- (iv) boats have reduced from 25 to 7 annually;
- (v) a strategy was being drafted in order to keep the South West on the national and international radar;

Resolved that the Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration (Economic Development) be invited to attend a future meeting once the strategy had been completed, in order to provide the panel with an update.

39. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

The Head of Transport Strategy informed the panel that Corporate Improvement Priority 11 (Improving access across the city) showed some slippage in achievement and informed the Panel that –

- (i) three milestones in CIP 11 were slipping in the access ability action plan, namely the access to health facilities, training and employment for young people;
- (ii) the council had accessibility action plans for 2006-2011;
- (iii) access to healthcare (to Derriford Hospital) was identified as a strategic objective for the Council;
- (iv) a draft for the Derriford Hospital Action Plan would be submitted to the Healthy Theme Group in January 2010;
- (v) Derriford was to see considerable development in future years through the Local Development Framework

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (vi) a result from a health and wellbeing survey showed that those without access found it twice as likely to have difficulties getting to Derriford Hospital;
- (vii) the council was trying to improve access via public transport;
- (viii) new shelters and cycle racks had been installed at the Derriford Interchange;
- (ix) the cycle network was to be prioritised in the Northern Corridor or the city;

- (x) the A386 was to be widened in order to install a South Bound bus lane;
- (xi) it was recognised that accessibility in the Local Area Action Plans was key to success;

Resolved that the Head of Transport Strategy be requested to return to the 25 January 2010 meeting to discuss further what measures need to be undertaken to progress Accessibility Action Plan targets.

40. HOE FORESHORE SITE VISIT UPDATE

The Chair informed the panel that the Hoe Foreshore Task and Finish Group was due to be finalised as a final site visit was taking place on 8 January 2010 in order to ensure that remedial works had been completed.

41. QUARTERLY SCRUTINY REPORT

The Panel noted the quarterly scrutiny report.

42. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES

The Panel considered the option to appoint a co-opted representative and resolved that this would be considered again at the next meeting after the Director for Development & Regeneration had helped to present his plans for the delivery of the future growth agenda.

43. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

The Business Manager for Development and Regeneration informed the panel that a resolution had been passed from the Devonport, Stoke, St Peter and the Waterfront Area Committee to the Management Board on 2 December 2009 in which the Growth and Prosperity Panel be asked to consider driving speeds on the Hoe.

Resolved that this be noted but meanwhile the Business Manager for Development and Regeneration identify whether the Transport & Highways service were already looking into this issue and to consider this item at a future meeting.

44. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel was informed that due to significant pressures in Democratic Support the proposed extra meeting for 'worklessness' which was due to be held in January could not be supported; it was therefore resolved that this item be scheduled for 22 March 2010. In order to accommodate this change it was agreed that 'Strategic Housing Functions' be moved from 25 January 2010 to 22 March 2010 meeting and that 'City and Sub Regional Governance' be moved from 22 March 2010 to 25 January 2010 meeting.

In response to a question raised, it was resolved that the Director for Development and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development be invited to the 25 January 2010 meeting in order to provide the Panel with an update on the Capital Programme.

Under this item it was also raised that Councillors Lowry and Aspinall would be named substitutes for Councillor Coker if he was unable to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

45. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There were no items of exempt business.

