

## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10  
**Committee:** Overview & Scrutiny Management Board  
**Date:** 28 July 2010  
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**Ref:**  
**Part:** Part I

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### **Executive Summary:**

This report sets out a review of the performance of the Council's scrutiny function for the year 2009-10.

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### **Corporate Plan 2010-2013:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Panels provide management of strategic scrutiny of all Corporate Improvement Priorities and scrutinise the Corporate Plan. The Management Board has scrutinised the Corporate Plan 2010-13 during the period covered by this report.

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### **Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land**

Scrutiny panels have scrutinised the revenue and capital budgets, and Corporate Improvement Priorities relating to the above during the period of this report.

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### **Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.**

As above.

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### **Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

That the report is noted

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### **Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

N/A

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### **Background papers:**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and panels minutes, reports and work programmes relating to meetings during 2009-10.

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# CITY OF PLYMOUTH

## Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10

### 1. Introduction

This report summarises key achievements of the Council's scrutiny function for the year 2009-10.

### 2. Scope of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements

The scope of the Council's overview and scrutiny panels were refreshed following changes to the Council's scrutiny structure agreed in July 2009. The Management Board's remit was enhanced to include a more pro-active management role for the scrutiny process as a whole, a greater emphasis on the scrutiny of partnerships, and the lead scrutiny role for finance and performance management. The Board is also now responsible for the scrutiny of the Council's Corporate Plan, and revenue and capital budget proposals. The Terms of Reference for the five scrutiny panels were updated to reflect the new corporate structure for the Council, and were aligned more closely with the Council's Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPS).

### 3. Achievements

#### 3.1 Partnerships

During 2009-10 the Council's scrutiny function has recognised and responded to its role in providing support and challenge to key partnerships in the city as well as the Council's own functions. A series of meetings have taken place between the chairs of scrutiny panels and Local Strategic Partnership Theme Groups to ensure that there is a shared understanding of respective roles, and an alignment of work programmes to ensure effective governance for the city as a whole. As a result, there are now protocols in place to ensure that agreed improvements are carried forward.

During the year, the Council and its partners have adopted a radical, area based localities agenda, which, though still in its development stage, has resulted in the city having shared locality boundaries with key partners such as health agencies and the police. This approach is unique amongst large unitaries in the UK, and should result in effective partnership working at a locality as well as city level. The Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook a review of the localities proposals over two days, hearing from a wide variety of interested parties, resulting in recommendations which were adopted by Cabinet and Council, including the makeup of Service Coordination Teams, and enhanced community engagement with localities. Scrutiny members continue to have a role in the review of arrangements as they are developed, with a full report following the first year's operation of new arrangements.

Recognising the importance of partnership working, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel have co-opted a non-executive board member from Plymouth Hospitals NHS trust onto the panel. The proposed centralisation of gynaecological cancer surgery has been put on hold following concerns raised by the panel during the consultation process, which received significant publicity across the region. A successful piece of joint working with members of the Children and Young People OSP resulted in the endorsement of proposals for specialised burns care

service for adults and children, including the establishment of a burns facility at Derriford Hospital.

The Management board co-opted the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, whose contribution to the annual scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan resulted in the Panel making recommendations to partnership organisations as well as to the executive of the Council.

### **3.2 The Corporate Plan**

The Board took an innovative approach to planning the above scrutiny, with facilitated planning meetings working with an independent IDeA Peer Officer. A comprehensive report was produced, containing a series of recommendations covering the full scope of the Corporate Plan and associated financial planning documents. The report was unanimously accepted at the Council meeting of 1 March 2010, and Cabinet subsequently accepted all its recommendations at its meeting of 16 March, passing on thanks for the quality of the report and recommendations. The IDeA Peer Officer fed back that the scrutiny approach to this process was a national exemplar of best practice.

### **3.3 Member Development**

The Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that it provided a 'tool kit' outlining the process and procedure for a Councillor Call for Action and the 'tool kit' is made available to Members, departments and interested parties within the next committee cycle. The Corporate Plan scrutiny preparation has been described by Members of the Board as one of the best member development opportunities of the year, facilitating robust, informed and challenging scrutiny of the budget and Corporate Plan resulting in high quality recommendations.

### **3.4 Key Strategies, Inspections and Policy scrutiny**

The Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel reviewed the ICT, People and Accommodation strategies during the year, and, as a result of its recommendations, these strategies are now being considered as interdependent and are being developed as a coherent whole.

A joint scrutiny panel made up of members of the Growth and Prosperity Panel and the Management Board considered the Citybus valuation proposal, and its recommendations were endorsed by the Cabinet and by full Council. The Growth and Prosperity panel also undertook a review of arrangements in the city for tackling worklessness, and recommended that the City Council take the lead of the worklessness agenda under the direction of the Local Strategic Partnership.

In addition to the task and finish groups described above with respect to Localities, Citybus and worklessness, a further three pieces of work were completed with respect to:

- Skateboarding – where members heard from a range of witnesses including skateboarders, the general public, the police and licensing representatives, which resulted in proposed changes to byelaws
- The Hoe Foreshore – which has resulted in the risks presented by the foreshore to the public being downgraded from 'red' to 'amber', and investment of £406k in the area

- Reducing Teenage Conception Rates in the City – where members heard from those with direct experience of being a young parent as well as from health professionals and which has resulted in recommendations to Cabinet reaffirming the City’s commitment to tackling the underlying drivers of teenage conception.

Members of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel were interviewed during the Ofsted Inspection of Children’s services in March 2010, making a contribution to an inspection outcome amongst the best in the UK

The Council’s Comprehensive Area Assessment report in December 2010 acknowledged the role of scrutiny in the Council’s performance management and governance arrangements.

#### **4. Future Challenges**

The agenda of the new government has presented significant challenges and opportunities to the city, in which the overview and scrutiny function will have a key role to play – areas for inclusion in future work programmes include:

- Legislative changes in the police, children’s, economic growth, community engagement and health work areas
- The abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment and changes in future partnership governance arrangements for the city.
- Managing delivery of the city’s vision during a period of significant budgetary constraint

#### **5. Recommendation**

That the progress of the Council’s scrutiny function be noted.