

Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 8 November 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor Nicholson, in the Chair.
Councillor Mrs Nelder, Vice Chair.
Councillors Berrow, K Foster, Mrs Nicholson (substitute), Roberts,
Mrs Stephens, Wheeler and Wright.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Martin Leaves

Also in attendance: Gill Peele - Business Manager for Development and Regeneration, Jonathan Fry - Policy and Performance Officer, Phil Heseltine - Head of Transport Strategy, Sunita Mills - Transport Strategy & Spatial Development Controller and Councillor Wiggins - Cabinet Member for Transport, Matt Garrett - Housing Options Manager, Stuart Palmer - Assistant Director for Strategic Housing and Clive Turner – Chief Executive for Plymouth Community Homes.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.10 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.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

52. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

53. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

54. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Chair updated the Panel on their tracking resolutions and feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

With regards to tracking resolutions, the Panel was informed that –

- (a) with regards to minute 36, 13 September 2010, the clarification of the scope of sustainability and climate change which was to be provided by the Director for Development and Regeneration would be submitted to the next Panel meeting on 10 January 2011;
- (b) with regards to minute 48 (xvii), the Assistant Director for Economic Development would update Members at the 10 January 2010 meeting on the prime tourism assets which were currently under utilized.

With regards to feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board the Panel was informed that the Review of Community Events and Road Closure Policy Task and Finish Group report and its recommendations were to be commended to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

55. **WRITTEN AND VERBAL UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

The Panel was provided with a written briefing report on Government Policy Changes.

Agreed that, as a result of this update, the following information be provided to the Panel:

1. changes to planning requirements to be submitted to the next meeting;
2. changes to the Sustainable Buildings Criteria to be emailed to Members of the Panel before the next meeting;
3. information on the Capitalisation Programme which would provide funding for 600 schools across the country to be submitted to the next meeting;
4. information on the Supporting People Grant to be submitted to the next meeting;
5. planning related announcements on transport to be submitted to the next meeting.

It was highlighted that the information provided to the Panel in the future, under this item, would specify how it would have a local impact on Plymouth.

56. **THE PLYMOUTH REPORT**

Jonathan Fry, Policy and Performance Officer, provided the Panel with an update on the Plymouth Report.

The Panel was informed that –

- (a) the report captured information from a variety of different sources which worked together to collate critical information for the city;

- (b) the report identified that local residents wanted to be kept informed of public expenditure;
- (c) the growth agenda was identified as a strength in the city however there was a low number of people who were self employed or doing technical jobs;
- (d) there was an imbalance of health and wealth in the western part of the city;
- (e) all partners were facing financial pressure due to the current economic climate;
- (f) the Plymouth Report became the basis for setting four new priorities for the city which would supersede the 14 Corporate Improvement Priorities;
- (g) since the publication of the report the Council had worked with key partners to identify a range of measures the partnership needed to focus on in order to aid delivery.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (h) the Council and its partners needed to work together more effectively to ensure work was not duplicated;
- (i) the Plymouth Report collated one set of data which could be interpreted in a consistent way.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Fry, Policy and Performance Officer, for his report and attendance at the meeting.

57. **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3**

Phil Heseltine - Head of Transport Strategy, Sunita Mills - Transport Strategy & Spatial Development Controller and Councillor Wiggins - Cabinet Member for Transport, provided the Panel with an update on the Local Transport Plan 3.

The Panel was informed that –

- (a) the plan would highlight the infrastructure required to aid the transport network over the next 15 years;
- (b) the LTP3 would aid the authority to prioritise investment;
- (c) a fixed amount of Regional Growth funding was anticipated to be 28% less than the baseline figure expected;

- (d) congestion difficulties had been experienced on the traffic network; congestion also increased carbon emissions in the city;
- (e) an objective of the LTP3 was to support growth in the city;
- (f) officers would liaise with local businesses as part of the consultation process;
- (g) a bike ability scheme had been running for 10/11 year olds in Plymouth; the government had funded this programme which would continue over the next four years to enable 85% to 90% of primary school children to participate;
- (h) a road show for the LTP3 started on 8 November 2010;
- (i) a presentation would be provided to all members on 24 November at 11am.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (j) the number of cars on the road network had increased approximately by 1% per annum however there was a limit of capacity on the road and the number of cars was beginning to level off;
- (k) council officers had access to the DVLA database to enable them to provide fixed penalty notices to residents filmed by the camera car in breach of a traffic regulation order.

The Chair thanked the officers and Councillor Wiggins for their attendance.

58. **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, PLANNING AND PROGRESS**

Phil Heseltine - Head of Transport Strategy, Sunita Mills - Transport Strategy & Spatial Development Controller and Councillor Wiggins - Cabinet Member for Transport, provided the Panel with an update on Equality of Opportunity, Planning and Progress. Under this item CIP 11 (Corporate Improvement Priority), Improving Access Across the City, was also discussed.

The Panel was informed that –

- (a) the LTP3 linked closely with CIP 11; the 12 week consultation exercise for LTP3 had begun and it was hoped that members of the public would engage with this process;
- (b) the LTP3 aimed to provide improvements for park and ride services, invested sums in car parks across the city and would focus on the traffic network as a whole;
- (c) capacity for higher levels of traffic would be increased, where possible, at major junctions in the city;

- (d) water assets would also be analysed;
- (e) residents would be encouraged to cycle to reduce the carbon footprint in the city;
- (f) children would be encouraged to walk to school; this would help to reduce the carbon footprint, reduce traffic on the road and would also aid in keeping children healthy;
- (g) a camera car had been travelling across Plymouth to target residents that consistently parked on keep clear areas; this would be continued as part of the LTP3;
- (h) officers were working hard to promote the use of the road and rail connection in Plymouth;
- (i) Gdynia Way was to re-open on Monday 15 November 2010 allowing better access around Prince Rock Primary School; the final phase of this section of the development was the link road on the Embankment which was currently going through a compulsory purchase order;
- (j) current works across the city included the resurfacing of sections of Tavistock road, the implementation of a cycle lane in Derriford, road widening of the Crownhill flyover, improved pedestrian crossing at Beacon Park Road and adjustments to lanes in Mayflower Street;
- (k) the Eastern Corridor development was a priority, further plans were being designed for Cattedown;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (l) Councillor Wiggins was unaware that the pedestrian crossing in Beacon Park, requested by residents, had been installed in the wrong place however this would be investigated;
- (m) Woolwell roundabout contributed to one of the worst bottleneck lanes in Plymouth as three lanes had to merge into one however it was expected that plans to alleviate this would be considered in the future;
- (n) the electronic bus timetable system situated in several bus stops across the city worked by locating buses through a Global Positioning System (GPS) and was updated every 30 seconds;
- (o) the number of bus services across Plymouth had decreased due to lack of money however this was a nationwide issue; the council tried to support services until commercially unviable however some services didn't have the patronage required to ensure the service remained;

- (p) bus companies were not always willing to highlight that a particular service was in danger of being withdrawn;
- (q) road works on Elliott Road bridge were due for completion; once it had been graded it would be suitable for traffic;
- (r) officers would continue to observe Gdynia way for safety, specifically with regards to children throwing debris into the road;
- (s) it would be beneficial for the city to implement a bicycle borrowing scheme however this would be very difficult and expensive to implement;
- (t) anyone with an operator's licence was available to apply to the traffic commission for a bus route.

The Chair thanked the officers and Councillor Wiggins for their attendance.

59. **POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW OF DEVON HOME CHOICE**

Matt Garrett, Housing Options Manager, and Stuart Palmer, Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, provided the Panel with an update on the Post Implementation Review of Devon Home Choice.

The Panel was informed that –

- (a) Devon Home Choice was launched in 2010 and was responsible for allocating social rented properties; it consisted of a partnership of 10 local authorities and Housing Associations across Devon;
- (b) there were five different bands of priority which identified housing need;
- (c) all properties were advertised online; hard copy information was also available in libraries and the civic centre;
- (d) a bidding process was used to allocate properties; the winning bid was decided by the highest band and time spent on the band;
- (e) the auto-bid system would bid for individuals who were unable to bid due to personal circumstances to ensure they were not disadvantaged;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (f) officers would contact people on the system who had not made a bid to ensure they were able to access the bidding system and also clarify if a property was still required;

- (g) properties were no longer advertised in the Evening Herald as it was considered to be too expensive;
- (h) officers recognised that a proportion of individuals in bands A and B needed more support in accessing the bidding system;
- (i) an individual could have greater priority in the bidding system if they were under-occupying a property.

The Chair thanked the Housing Options Manager and Assistant Director for Strategic Housing for their attendance.

60. **PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES PRESENTATION**

Clive Turner, Chief Executive of Plymouth Community Homes, provided the Panel with an update on Plymouth Community Homes.

The Panel was informed that –

- (a) Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) was a 'not for profit' landlord which had received £250m of capital investment;
- (b) PCH were working on a major re-generation potential in North Prospect;
- (c) 50 promises in the PCH agreement had been completed;
- (d) there was continued improvement works to homes;
- (e) PCH were involved in locality working in Plymouth;
- (f) the Annual Report had been published;
- (g) Barratts had been appointed for phase 1 of the North Prospect development;
- (h) in the North Prospect development, 47% of households to be developed had moved, 27% of households had agreed to move and 26% still had to reach an agreement;
- (i) a planning application for the North Prospect development was due to be submitted to the Council in November;
- (j) work was planned to start in February 2011 in North Prospect;
- (k) interim work had started in Wordsworth Avenue,
- (l) PCH had faced challenges involving contractors, the depot location, funding and the Tenant Services Authority;

- (m) PCH was due to separate its use of ICT with Plymouth City Council imminently.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (n) PCH were working with a number of localities such as Whitleigh and Devonport;
- (o) PCH had a promise to its tenants to ensure rent was affordable;
- (p) it was confirmed that Police were aware of who had been stealing boilers in Wordsworth Avenue;
- (q) PCHs business plan had not yet changed as a result of the potential rise in rents;
- (r) the Council was unable to affect PCH rent policy;
- (s) the first two PCH promises were not achieved due to the work of the previous developer;
- (t) a further presentation was due to be submitted to the Council in March 2011;
- (u) the same rent charges would be applied to individuals that had moved out of housing in North Prospect due to refurbishment;
- (v) as a result of the change in policy for allocation of housing need to single 35 year olds, it was considered that PCH did not have many single 35 year olds to accommodate however one bedroom flats were available;
- (w) it was expected that the housing policy would be analysed in December 2010 in order for a draft policy to be ready by April 2011;

The Vice Chair thanked Clive Turner, Chief Executive of Plymouth Community Homes, for his presentation.

Agreed that a list of Plymouth Community Homes involvement in locality working would be provided to Councillor Wildy and that a timetable for the draft housing strategy would be provided to all Members once available.

61. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted their work programme for 2010/2011.

62. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.