

From: Adrian Vinken
To: Gallin, Ian (CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPT)
Cc: Burgoyne, Carole (COMMUNITY SERVICES)
Sent: Tue Jan 04 18:33:38 2011
Subject: PCC 2011/12 budget Partner Consultation

Dear Ian

As you are aware I am unfortunately unable to attend the consultation interview opportunity on January 5th. Given the relatively late request for feedback and the subsequent dominance of the holiday period it has not been possible to consult adequately on the budget proposals with the wider cultural sector in the city. I have, however, had the opportunity to share and review the full budget report submitted to the Council's Cabinet on 14th December with senior management colleagues. What follows, therefore, is a collective albeit somewhat narrow headline response to the Council's draft proposals.

Firstly the Council is to be congratulated on its strategic reorganisation in recent years and, in particular, on the way in which it used the June 2010 emergency budget to introduce significant in year savings. The former clearly helped preempt the challenges presented by the CSR and the latter enabled PCC to 'get ahead of the game' in creating a viable budgetary model for 2011/12. We note and applaud the intention that much of the projected savings should be achieved by 'doing things differently' and that this will necessitate further 'transformational change'. The prioritised 'invest to save' reserve is clearly a prerequisite for this particularly with regard to ICT and 'back office' improvements but this will need to be complemented by further cultural change and appropriately informed and aware localised departmental leadership.

Secondly we welcome the distillation of the Council's previous fourteen priorities down to the four now proposed and the consequent alignment of both revenue and capital investment budgets. Whilst progress against all four new priorities is essential in realising the 2020 vision for the city we would suggest that 'Delivering Growth' should be the overarching priority as it is the long term prerequisite for the city to be able to address its three other key objectives. The overall structure of the proposed budget and its targeted areas of cost savings would seem to align well with these new priorities.

Thirdly the role of partnerships could be significant in the Council's ability to achieve its saving targets. In certain areas the 'doing things differently' agenda may obviously be achieved by PCC outsourcing services or making better use of partners from other sectors. In this context we note the recent KPMG report commissioned by PCC suggests that the Council might benefit from outsourcing other areas of its cultural services to the Theatre Royal charity or alternative private/charitable sector service providers. This may merit serious investigation in the future.

Lastly the Council's commitment to the building of the Life Centre has been quite remarkable given the financial pressures it faces and it will undoubtedly prove to be a great asset not only for Plymouth residents but also

economically as a driver in the overall marketing of the city. We would urge however that, in the future, any new major cultural assets of city wide or sub regional significance should, wherever physically possible, be encouraged to locate in the city centre. The essential ingredient in the overall Plymouth 'offer' that needs to stand at the heart of both the 'Positively Plymouth' branding and the new Destination Plymouth Visitor Plan is a vibrant city centre underpinning a strong visitor economy. The strength of that economy will come from the combination of a range of complementary sectors (eg retail, hospitality, heritage, entertainment, conferencing, the arts etc) which will provide a wealth of alternative reasons for people to visit the city and spend time (and money) in its centre.

I trust that you find the above both useful and constructive.

Yours sincerely

Adrian

Cc Carole Burgoyne

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