

**Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

Annual Report

June 2011



Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2010-11

Plymouth City Council

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Foreword

Our Constitution summarises the purpose of the Council's scrutiny function as follows:

- To add value to Council business and decision-making.
- To hold the Cabinet to account.
- To monitor the budget and performance of services.
- To assist the Council in the development of policy and review the effectiveness of the implementation of Council policy.
- Work to outcomes, which can be measured and have a positive impact on the community.

The last year has presented a number of challenges to the Council's five scrutiny panels and the Scrutiny Management Board in delivering against their objectives. There has been a change of government, bringing with it a number of significant pieces of new legislation affecting both local government and our strategic partners in the city. A period of financial restraint has meant that difficult decisions have had to be made about resourcing priorities. The regulatory regime has also changed, so that external oversight of the way that the Council works has reduced.

We feel that the Members and officers engaged in the scrutiny function have risen to these challenges well. In October 2010, the Council reaffirmed its vision, to become one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone. We also adopted four priorities for the city, which we share with all our key partners:

- **Deliver growth:** Develop Plymouth as a thriving growth centre by creating the conditions for investment in quality new homes, jobs and infrastructure
- **Raise aspirations:** Promote Plymouth and encourage people to aim higher and take pride in the city
- **Reduce inequality:** Narrow the inequality gap, particularly in health, between communities
- **Provide value for communities:** Work together to maximise resources to benefit customers and make internal efficiencies

This report summarises the achievements of the panels and the management board against these priorities over the last year.

We want to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the achievements that we have made this year. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the overview and scrutiny panels, with their Lead and Democratic support officers have delivered a large and varied scrutiny programme over the last year. We know that, behind the published results of their work, many hours of discussion, research and debate have taken place. The members of the panels have had to balance their contribution to the scrutiny process with their other commitments as Councillors, and their high attendance rate, as well as the quality of the work of their panels is testament to their success at this. A number of Co-opted members have given freely of their time and

expertise to support the panels and we would especially like to extend our thanks to them. All members of the Cabinet have been before scrutiny and we thank them for their attendance, which has not always been comfortable for them! Finally, our thanks go to the large number of officers, both senior and junior from the Council and its partners who have attended panels as witnesses and contributors and without whom our work would not be possible.



Councillor James, Chair



Councillor Ball, Vice-Chair 2010-11

Deliver growth: Develop Plymouth as a thriving growth centre by creating the conditions for investment in quality new homes, jobs and infrastructure

The Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel has taken the lead in support of this priority, although the work of other panels, and the Management Board has supported this priority. Over the past year, the panel has focused on Growth and Regeneration challenges in delivering the Local Economic Strategy, the Local Transport Plan and developing a fit for purpose strategic housing service. The panel has worked closely with the Wealthy Theme Group as it has become the Growth Board for Plymouth, and has delivered the following specific work items:

- Hoe and Foreshore Maintenance, ensuring that measures were taken to reduce the health and safety risk assessment for this key part of the city reduced from 'red' to 'amber'.
- The Port of Plymouth study, supporting the development of a 'port master plan' to deliver a major step change in the use and planning for this vital city asset
- Private Sector Housing peer challenge, supporting the implementation of the improvement plan completed following the review
- Review of the delivery of the commitments made to tenants of Plymouth Community Homes
- The development of a policy for road closure for community events, including an annual list of events for which the council will provide the temporary traffic regulation orders free of charge
- Ensuring that public consultation arrangements for the 'Local Transport Plan 3' are robust and inclusive
- Ensuring the delivery of development schemes funded through 'Section 106' monies due to the Council
- Improvements to the Council's approach to Highways Maintenance arrangements, ensuring better targeting of resources and a more proactive approach to the type of repairs carried out, and recommendations for stronger emphasis on this area of activity in budget setting.

Raise aspirations: Promote Plymouth and encourage people to aim higher and take pride in the city

This priority is supported across the scrutiny function.

- Input into the Place Management Strategy, aiming to create 7500 jobs in the tourism sector in the city over the next 15 years, and support for the new city branding Positively Plymouth, developing and delivering a new, coherent Visitor Strategy for the city
- Focused on the lessons to be learned from the policing and stewardship of major football matches at Home Park to safeguard the city's reputation for effective management of major sporting events
- Review of the Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy, including the Cumulative Impact Policy, supporting effective management of licensed premises to ensure the city's Night-time Economy is in keeping with the overall vision for the city
- Recommended the production and adoption of a Volunteering Plan for the city, and ensured the continued provision of resources to fund the Volunteer Centre and for infrastructure support to community and voluntary groups
- Championed the establishment of a 'small grants scheme' for community and voluntary groups, funded from partnership resources
- Heard from a range of media professionals about ways in which the Council could better promote its scrutiny activities through more effective use of a range of media channels
- Championed school attainment, with focus this year of Primary School educational outcomes

Reduce inequality: Narrow the inequality gap, particularly in health, between communities

- Raising the profile of the issue of Teenage Conception within the city, ensuring better understanding of the issues, more focus on achieving reductions in rates and improved championing and resourcing arrangements
- Renewing focus on the role of Young Carers in the city, and delivering improvements in identification and support arrangements
- Highlighting the issues facing young, unaccompanied Asylum Seekers in Plymouth
- Focus on the findings of Ofsted inspections into children's social care, and overview of the implementation of planned improvements
- Reviewed the strategic plans of NHS Plymouth agencies, ensuring a greater focus on the city's shared priorities amongst partner health organisations
- Input into the creation of the new Plymouth Provider Servicers health delivery organisation, with particular input into its governance and community benefit arrangements
- Providing a platform for users of specialist gynaecological cancer services to voice their concerns about a possible move of services from the city
- A review of consultation arrangements concerned with substantial changes to residential care arrangements in the city
- Responses to government consultation on the Health and Social Care White paper, resulting in changes in the proposed legislation around the role of scrutiny panels

Provide value for communities: Work together to maximise resources to benefit customers and make internal efficiencies

- Supported a more integrated approach to the Council's Accommodation, People's and ICT strategies, ensuring that rationalisation of the way that staff occupy buildings is supported by the appropriate technology, training and people management arrangements
- A review of the Council's appraisal system, ensuring best practise is better reflected and delivery rates improved
- Oversight of the Council's 'Invest to Save' proposals, recommending improved governance arrangements, and improved alignment with city priorities
- Championed the use of Value for Money benchmarking with other authorities to ensure the Council is aware of its progress relative to others
- Highlighted the need for greater emphasis on 'shared service' arrangements with other Local Authorities and agencies to achieve greater efficiencies in the provision of 'back office' functions
- Delivered high quality scrutiny of the Council's budget and corporate plan, resulting in a number of recommendations to the Council, the vast majority of which were accepted
- Provided for Partner scrutiny of the Council's budget, with feedback from Health, Police and Community and Voluntary Sector colleagues taken into account in budget recommendations
- Championed the first 'on-line' budget consultation exercise across the city, so that the public's views could be considered during scrutiny of the budget