

# Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 12 September 2011

## PRESENT:

Councillor Peter Smith, Vice Chair in the Chair.  
Councillors Mrs Aspinall (Substitute for Councillor John Smith), Mrs Beer, Mrs Bowyer, Churchill, Davey, Delbridge, Dreaan (Substitute for Councillor Thompson), Martin Leaves, Penberthy, Reynolds and Vincent.

Apologies for absence: Councillors John Smith and Thompson and Co-opted Representative Dr A Jellings.

Also in attendance: Pete Aley – Assistant Director for Safer Communities, Councillor Bowyer – Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People, Carole Burgoyne – Director for Community Services, James Coulton – Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Leisure, Tony Hopwood – Programmes Director, Tim Howes – Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance, Councillor Jordan – Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport) and Mr F E Sharpe – Petition Organiser.

The meeting started at 4pm and finished at 5.40pm.

*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.*

## 20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the code of conduct, the following declarations of interest were made –

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Mrs Beer	Minute 25 Reporting of Police Authority Meetings (Chief Constable's Report)	Employed by Devon and Cornwall Police	Personal
Councillor Delbridge	Minute 25 Reporting of Police Authority Meetings (Chief Constable's Report)	Son is employed by the Devon and Cornwall Police	Personal

21. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2011 are confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following –

- (1) 'taxi driver' is added to Councillors Martin Leaves' and John Smith's declarations of interest set out in minute 12;
- (2) 'concerns regarding the accessibility of the Plymouth Life Centre for those people relying on the extremely limited bus services during the evening period' is added to minute 16.

22. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

23. **PLYMOUTH LIFE CENTRE AND LEISURE RELATED PROJECTS PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The panel agreed to consider the travel arrangements report under part I of the agenda and not under exempt business, as shown in the agenda pack.

The Director for Community Services submitted an update report on the Plymouth Life Centre and leisure related projects programme. The update highlighted the following main areas –

- (a) Plymouth Life Centre –
  - work was progressing well, including the installation of the moveable floor booms in main pool hall, the fitting of the coloured glass on the external walls of the dive tower area and the installation of the columns at the main entrance; a large section of the new car park had been handed back and was currently being used by members of the public;
  - site visits would be controlled more effectively, following concerns raised by Balfour Beatty;
- (b) Leisure Management Update –
  - work was being undertaken with Everyone Active to develop their mobilisation proposals and meet with staff from the various organisations that would TUPE transfer to them; (Everyone Active had already taken over the facilities at Plympton pool and Brickfields);
  - the pricing structure was competitive and prices were fixed until 31 March 2013;

- extracts from the Everyone Active's draft travel plan were provided;
- (c) Brickfields –
- the transfer of Brickfields Sports Centre to Devonport Community Leisure Limited (DCLL) had been completed on 1 September 2011 (which had subsequently been sub leased to Everyone Active who had now taken over the building and was managing it on behalf of DCLL);
- (d) Events Field –
- the circus would be located on the Cottage Field between 24 August and 4 September 2011 (the site was accessible to the public and in particular to those with a disability);
  - a meeting with representatives from the circus would be held to discuss the entrance and egress from the site (avoiding the road between the Mayflower Centre and the Plymouth Life Centre;
- (e) Skateboard Park –
- work had commenced on site on 11 July 2011 and was programmed to be completed by 3 October 2011;
  - the planning authority had approved the drainage proposals (which formed part of the ground conditions) for the site.

Councillor Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People and Councillor Jordan, Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport) advised that –

- (f) a site visit had been undertaken by some members of the panel and it was hoped that they now had a clear understanding of the facility;
- (g) the pricing structure for all the leisure facilities had been set at a competitive rate;
- (h) it was hoped that Everyone Active would put forward some innovative ideas to promote the use of Brickfields, as the facility was currently under used;
- (i) admission prices for both Brickfields and Plympton pool had been reduced and the number of child swimming lesson places had been increased (previously there had been a waiting list of 70 children).

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the panel –

- (j) the car park strategy was currently being developed by Everyone Active who would be responsible for managing the car park; the car park would be free of charge for the foreseeable future, except on Plymouth Argyle home matches (the charge would be redeemable at the Plymouth Life Centre);
- (k) the initial problems that had been encountered with Everyone Active's website would be followed up;
- (l) a suitable location for the taxi rank was currently being investigated;
- (m) the provision of direct bus services to the Plymouth Life Centre from across the city and the frequency of the services, particularly at weekends and evenings would be followed up with the transport department;
- (n) if a bus service had been identified which was commercially viable, proposals to run this service would be put forward by the bus operator;
- (o) there was currently a considerable level of interest from GP's (several visits had been undertaken with GPs in the city) who were now able to see the benefits of working together;
- (p) the issues raised by Councillor Penberthy which included the joining up of the cycle routes to allow people to cycle to the facility; the draft travel plan making no reference to Plymouth Argyle home matches; the unquantifiable car movement targets and the incentives on a reduction in the ticket price rather than a cup of coffee, would be followed up.

24. **APPEAL AGAINST COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO A PETITION**

A petition had been received by Mr F E Sharpe (the petition organiser) regarding 'please consult the residents of Plymstock and give them a vote on Plymstock swimming pool site'. The petition contained 200 signatures and as such fell short of the 2,500 required to enable the petition organiser to hold an 'officer to account' at a meeting of one of the Council's scrutiny panels.

In accordance with the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act, 2009 and the Council's own petition scheme, the petition organiser can ask the relevant scrutiny panel to review the Council's response, if they consider that the Council had not dealt with the petition properly.

In response to a question raised by Mr Sharpe at Full Council on 25 July 2011, it was agreed that the appeal would be considered by the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Mr Sharpe presented his case, which included the following key points –

- (a) the response received from James Coulton, Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Leisure had not made reference to consulting with the residents of Plymstock on the location of a swimming pool;
- (b) the petition was online which precluded those people without access to the internet from being able to sign it and requested that a public meeting was held in order to consult with the residents of Plymstock;
- (c) the proposal to provide a swimming pool in Plymstock had been discussed for a considerable number of years;
- (d) requested that the original Broadway site was reconsidered as this was a central location in Plymstock and was easily accessible;
- (e) the proposal for the provision of a swimming pool was part of the Sherford development but no date had been given as to when the facility would be provided.

The Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Leisure presented the Council's case, which included the following key points –

- (f) the potential for Section 106 monies from the development of Sherford and other developments in the area would contribute towards the building of a swimming pool (approximately £1m); without this funding the Council would be unable to fund such a facility;
- (g) it would not be financially viable to operate two swimming pools in such close proximity to each other, one being in Plymstock and the other in Sherford;
- (h) the Council had published relevant strategies, clearly outlining its position on the this matter; extensive research had been undertaken to draft both the Plymouth Swimming Facilities Strategy and Plymouth Sport Facilities Strategy; the Swimming Facilities Strategy had identified the need to provide facilities in the north and east of the city, as well as the Plymouth Life Centre (the leisure development at Marjons had met this need in the north of the city); the provision of a pool in the east of the city was a priority;
- (i) consultation with external organisations had taken place and a strategic analysis of the data had been undertaken by Sport England; there had also been extensive consultation via the relevant area action plan.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members of the panel to officers –

- (j) discussions would be held with the Plymstock and District Swimming Pool Association nearer to the delivery date for the pool, to ascertain if the Association would be willing to contribute towards the facility;
- (k) due to the current economic situation, a date could not be provided as to when works would commence on the swimming pool; although the facility would be delivered in the first phase of the Sherford development;
- (l) due to lack of funding, it was not an option, at this stage to seek a contribution from Sport England towards the pool;
- (m) the need had been identified for swimming facilities in the east of the city; the most feasible option of providing these facilities was to use the Section 106 funding from Sherford and other developments in the area.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members of the panel to the petition organiser –

- (m) no date had been given for the provision of the swimming pool which formed part of the Sherford development;
- (n) a public meeting was needed to fully discuss the potential sites within Plymstock for the swimming pool; the original Broadway site which had previously been refused needed to be relooked at;
- (o) swimming facilities would improve the health of Plymstock residents.

The following key points arose from the panel's discussion on this issue –

- (p) whether the letter to Mr Sharpe should have evidenced that consultation had taken place;
- (q) whether a special localities/neighbourhood meeting should take place in order to consult with the residents of Plymstock on a site for the pool;

Having taken into account all the information provided, the panel agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the Council's response to the petition was satisfactory.

## 25. **REPORTING OF POLICE AUTHORITY MEETINGS (CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT)**

The panel considered the June 2011 Chief Constable's report to the Police Authority and noted that there had been an increase in the number of reported incidents of burglaries.

The panel agreed that a report on the crime figures, including the increase in burglaries is provided at its next meeting and that the information needed to be specific to neighbourhoods.

26. **ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT 2010/11**

The panel noted the annual Overview and Scrutiny report 2010/11.

27. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The panel noted its tracking resolutions.

28. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Assistant Director for Safer Communities submitted a report on items for update on the work programme. The report outlined the following –

- (a) the process to be used for items that had been identified for updates only;
- (b) issues that had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, regarding the panel's work programme.

The panel agreed that –

- (1) the revenues and benefits service item is removed from the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny panel's work programme and any issues concerning benefits make-up are considered within the universal credit and/or financial inclusion service on the programme;
- (2) updates on locality working and police and crime commissioner/panel follow the process and scope outlined in the report.

The panel agreed to recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to endorse a task and finish group on social media, to be undertaken by the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The panel agreed to look at the red, amber and green (RAG) score cards (from the joint finance and performance monitoring report) at its meeting in November.

29. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.