

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Bi-annual Scrutiny Report
Committee: Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Date: 21 November 2011
Cabinet Member: -
CMT Member: Director for Community Services
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Ref: CCOSP 2011/12
Key Decision: No.
Part: 1

Executive Summary:

This report sets out a review of the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the period June 2011 – October 2011.

Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014:

The Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel provides strategic scrutiny for the following City and Council priorities –

- reduce inequalities
 - value for communities
-

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

None.

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

None.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

To note the report.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

n/a

Background papers:

Customers and Communities OSP Terms of Reference
Reports submitted to panel meetings
Minutes

Sign off: n/a

1.0 Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Bi-annual Report

1.1 Introduction

This report sets out the progress of the Customers and Communities OSP for the period of June 2011 to October 2011 which includes the following meetings –

6 June 2011
18 July 2011
12 September 2011
24 October 2011

2.0 Scope of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

2.1 The Customers and Communities OSP is primarily concerned with the strategic scrutiny of the following city and Council Priorities, the key areas are as follows –

- reduce inequalities
- value for communities

2.2 The detailed terms of reference for the panel are contained in appendix I.

2.3 Through effective strategic and operational scrutiny, the panel aims to support the following Cabinet Members and Council Management Team member –

Title	Name
Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People	Councillor Bowyer
Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport)	Councillor Jordan
Cabinet Member for Community Services (Street Scene, Waste and Sustainability)	Councillor Michael Leaves
Cabinet Member for Customer Services	Councillor Jordan
Director for Community Services	Carole Burgoyne

2.4 The panel consists of the following Councillors and officers –

Name	Attendance (4 meetings)
Councillor Thompson (Chair)	3
Councillor Peter Smith (Vice Chair)	4
Councillor Mrs Beer*	3
Councillor Mrs Bowyer	4
Councillor Browne*	1
Councillor Churchill	4
Councillor Davey	3
Councillor Delbridge	3
Councillor Martin Leaves	4
Councillor Reynolds	2
Councillor Penberthy	4
Councillor John Smith	3
Councillor Vincent	4
Pete Aley Lead Officer	3
Helen Wright – Democratic Support Officer	4

* following confirmation at full council on 25 July 2011 Councillor Mrs Beer replaced Councillor Browne.

3. Key Achievements during the period of June 2011 to October 2011

- 3.1 The panel believes it has made a positive and constructive contribution to support the strategic and operational overview, in particular the following achievements have been made –
- the panel continued to monitor the Plymouth Life Centre and related projects. As the construction of the building was nearing its completion, the panel had moved its focus to monitoring the progress of the contract and had requested that the leisure contractor provide an overview at its November 2011 meeting.
 - following concerns raised from the Chief Constable's report to the Police Authority regarding the increase in serious acquisitive crime, the panel requested a report providing detail behind this increase. The panel was assured to hear that the Devon and Cornwall Police area was the third safest force area in England and Wales. However, both burglaries from dwellings and thefts from vehicles had increased. The panel heard that a wide range of work was being undertaken to address this problem and agreed to bring this issue back to its March 2012 meeting to consider the Police's experience of crimes, particularly burglary over the Christmas period. By discussing this issue the panel had raised public awareness as it had attracted media attention.
 - the panel was requested to consider an appeal against the Council's response to a petition that had been received relating to allowing Plymstock residents to vote on a site for a swimming pool. Mr Sharpe, the petition organiser and Council officers were invited to the panel's meeting in September to present their respected cases. The panel considered all the evidence and found that the Council's response to the petition had been satisfactory.

- following consideration of the Sex Establishment Licensing Policy, the panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet that Good Fridays be included in the Policy with similar opening hours to Sundays and that individual letters were sent to residents, chairs of school governors, religious establishments, as well as relevant Ward Councillors notifying them of any application.
- The panel considered the Strategic Framework for Information and Advice Services Framework. The panel heard that the provision of good quality information and advice services were central elements of support for the Council's customers. This was particularly relevant at the present time due to the scale of changes relating to the reform of welfare benefit and the delivery of adult social care services. The panel were concerned to learn that a total of £14m of benefits had not been claimed.
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4. Future Issues for the Panel

- 4.1 The panel had agreed to participate in scrutiny training at its next meeting scheduled for 21 November 2011. The training would be delivered by an independent trainer who would meet with the panel one hour prior to its meeting to provide training on two pre-determined subjects (chosen by the panel). The trainer would observe the meeting, provide verbal feedback and constructive criticism, followed by a written report to the panel's next meeting.
- 4.2 The panel would be holding a Task and Finish Group to look at social behaviour in the Compton Ward, namely in Carlton Close and Channel Park Avenue on Monday 28 November 2011. Representatives from Plymouth City Council's anti social behaviour unit had been invited to attend together with representatives from the police, youth service, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer, Plymouth Community Homes, Ward Councillors and residents.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the progress of the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

- To review new and existing policies and consider how they may be improved and developed;
- To monitor the budget and performance of the Cabinet Member, Department and partners to ensure that the priorities for the area are being delivered upon;
- To monitor performance against the relevant Corporate Improvement Priorities;
- To review Policies within the Budget and Policy Framework;
- To consider Equality Impact Assessments against new and existing policies;
- To investigate local issues to find out how the council and its partners can improve to meet the needs of local people;
- To make recommendations about service delivery to the Cabinet (via the Board)
- To review and scrutinise the performance of partner organisations
- To set up Ad-Hoc Working Groups as and when required;
- To produce quarterly progress reports to go to the management board

Policy areas

- Customer Services
- Environmental Services
- Safer Communities
- Leisure, Culture and Sport
- Environmental regulation
- Crime and Disorder (This Panel will take on the role of the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Panel)

Cabinet Members

- Community Services (Street Scene, Waste and Sustainability) formerly Street Scene, Waste and Sustainability
- Customer Services formerly Customer Services, Performance and Partnerships
- Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport) formerly Safer and Stronger Communities

Directorates

- Community Services
- Corporate Support

Corporate Priorities

- monitor performance against the relevant corporate priorities

LSP Link

- Safe and Strong

Membership

The Chair of the Panel shall serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be chaired by a Member of the majority political group with the vice-chair from the opposition political group. All Members of the panel will adhere to the general rules of Overview and Scrutiny.