

Cabinet

Tuesday 6 March 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Pengelly, in the Chair.

Councillor Fry, Vice Chair.

Councillors Ball, Bowyer, Jordan, Michael Leaves, Sam Leaves, Monahan, Ricketts and Wigans.

Also in attendance: Adam Broome (Director for Corporate Services), Anthony Payne (Director for Place), Clive Perkin (Assistant Director for Transport and Infrastructure) and Nicola Kirby (Senior Democratic Support Officer (Cabinet)).

Apologies for absence: Barry Keel (Chief Executive) and Carole Burgoyne (Director for People).

The meeting started at 2 pm and finished at 2.20 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Cabinet 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.

128. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct from councillors in relation to items under consideration at this meeting.

129. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

130. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from the public for this meeting.

CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

131. **Lord Mayoralty Function**

The Chair referred to a recent press article on the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's task and finish group relating to the Lord Mayoralty function. She had not been invited to attend the meeting and made a statement to Cabinet as she had not had a right of reply.

The statement referred to –

- the Lord Mayor and the role of the Lord Mayor being critical to the City and its future;

- the budget of £225,000 for 2012/13 which was in line with other Cities with similar populations and status;
- the budget reductions for the Lord Mayoralty for this financial year which had been agreed by the Cabinet of which the current Lord Mayor was part;
- the role which needed to remain relevant, dignified and up to date but at the same time reflect its historical importance to the City and region;
- the Lord Mayoralty which could not be divorced from the real financial pressures faced by the Council and families across the city when the Council was having to cut funds for services, lose staff and completely change the way it worked and delivered services;
- the damage to the Council with the nature of the current debate.

(In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Chair brought forward the above item for urgent consideration because of the need to respond to the press article).

132. **NORTH PROSPECT LIBRARY - PROPOSED RELOCATION TO COMMUNITY HUB, NORTH PROSPECT ROAD - ACQUISITION OF LEASE**

The Director for Corporate Services and the Director for People submitted a written report on a proposal to relocate North Prospect Library from its current freehold premises at Greatlands Place, to larger leasehold premises at the planned community hub complex to be constructed at North Prospect Road.

Councillor Jordan (Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport)) presented the report which indicated that -

- (a) in addition to operating costs of the library premises, the Council would be liable for a service charge contribution towards the costs of maintaining and operating the community hub complex, including communal areas;
- (b) revenue costs would be met from the library service revenue budget;
- (c) the proposed relocation would enable the library service to provide an improved service from better quality, more accessible accommodation in a customer friendly location;
- (d) the new premises would need to be fitted out for use as a public library, with the capital cost being met from within the Community Services capital programme.

The Chair drew Cabinet Members' attention to the separate confidential written report referred to in minute 136 below.

Agreed that approval is given to –

- (1) the acquisition of a lease, for a term of ninety-nine years, of premises to be constructed within the proposed community hub complex on North Prospect Road for the relocation of the North Prospect Library from the current premises at Greatlands Place. Agreement of detailed terms to be delegated to the Director for Corporate Services;
- (2) the addition of the proposed fit out of the new library facility to the Community Services capital programme.

133. **SETTING THE SCHOOLS' REVENUE BUDGET 2012/13**

The Director for People submitted a written report on the proposed initial determination of the schools' budget for 2012/13 so that notice could be given to the governing bodies of the schools that it maintains before 31 March 2012.

Councillor Sam Leaves (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) presented the report which -

- (a) outlined the main areas for consideration as follows -
 - the schools' funding settlement;
 - Phase II of the Special Educational Needs funding review;
 - the operation of the pupil premium;
 - the policy for expanding schools;
 - the overall affordability of the schools' budget;
- (b) indicated that the schools' budget included the individual schools' budget which was determined by the local schools funding formula and all other expenditure incurred in connection with the authority's functions in relation to the provision of primary, secondary and special education and all relevant early years provision;
- (c) advised that the local authority determined the local schools' funding formula to ensure the equitable distribution across all schools, in consultation with the Schools' Forum;
- (d) stated that the schools' budget was funded from the ringfenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and post 16 funding from the Young People's Learning Agency;

- (e) indicated that the DSG had faced rising pressures over the last few years due to the increasing cost of providing for Special Education Needs (SEN) pupils. The Schools' Forum commissioned a sub-group to review the funding of SEN in June 2009, to ensure it effectively and efficiently met the needs of pupils.

Councillor Sam Leaves thanked the Schools' Forum for their hard work and Cabinet Members, in particular, welcomed the pupil premium which recognised the difficulties faced by service families.

Agreed that -

- (1) the recommendations of the Schools' Forum are accepted as follows –
 - (a) to discontinue assessment nursery provision from July 2012;
 - (b) to change the special school banding system from April 2012;
 - (c) to update the proxy indicators used in the Category A formula to reflect the proposed split set out in paragraph 4.24 of the written report;
 - (d) to transfer savings on Category B arising from pupils transitioning from primary to secondary in September 2012 and year 11, 12 and 13 pupils leaving the school system of £0.630m to the Category A budget;
 - (e) to continue to fund primary schools in-year for the additional pupils as a result of the local authority increasing the school Planned Admission Number;
- (2) the risk to the central Dedicated Schools Grant budget as schools transfer to academy status, is noted;
- (3) the proposed Dedicated Schools Grant budget should be set with a predicted surplus of £0.313m to be carried forward to the 2013/14 financial year. The predicted surplus will be updated to reflect the January 2012 pupil numbers and the final individual schools' budget calculation.

134. **CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO GREATER WESTERN FRANCHISE REPLACEMENT**

The Director for Place submitted a written report appending the over-arching statement setting out the core objectives required in the new franchise for the Greater Western route. This would be submitted as a joint consultation response by Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and local MPs together with individual detailed consultation responses, letters of support from stakeholders in the business community and supporting evidence.

Councillor Wigen (Cabinet Member for Transport) presented the report which indicated that -

- (a) the Department for Transport (DfT) had issued notice to commence the process to award a new franchise for the Greater Western route starting in April 2013 for 15 years. A period of public consultation would be undertaken and views were sought from stakeholders on the specification that would be provided to short listed bidders;
- (b) in September 2011, Plymouth City Council in partnership with Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, had jointly commissioned a study on rail connectivity to bring together data and information from a range of sources. The study demonstrated, through inclusion of wider economic benefits, the importance of good rail connectivity to business activity and supporting inward investment;
- (c) the franchise replacement process presented an opportunity to put forward a robust case for improvement to increase the number of faster trains between London and Exeter (two hours) Plymouth (three hours) and Penzance (five hours);
- (d) to achieve the implementation of these proposals would require effective channels of communication between South West local authorities, both Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in the far South West, the Department for Transport and the bidders once the shortlist was announced in May. It was crucial for these key stakeholders to be fully aligned behind the objectives of faster journey times which would allow a stronger case to be made to the DfT during the franchise consultation phase;
- (e) to add weight to the response, Cabinet sign off was sought to the core objectives of the new franchise specification, with the Council's counterparts in Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Torbay also signing up to the same set of core objectives.

Councillor Wigen also reported that the precise wording of the consultation response was still under discussion and that the City Council would also be submitting its own detailed response.

Agreed that –

- (1) the report is noted;
- (2) approval is given to the over-arching response from the South West Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships to the Department for Transport's consultation on the Greater Western Franchise Replacement;

- (3) authority is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Transport, in consultation with the Director for Place, to give final approval to the wording of the final consultation response.

135. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Agreed that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public are excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

136. **NORTH PROSPECT LIBRARY PROPOSED RELOCATION TO COMMUNITY HUB, NORTH PROSPECT ROAD - ACQUISITION OF LEASE (E3)**

The written report of the Director for Corporate Services and the Director for People was submitted providing confidential details relating to the proposal to relocate North Prospect Library at Greatlands Place, to larger leasehold premises at the planned community hub complex to be constructed at North Prospect Road.

(See also minute 132 above).