

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 14 November 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillor Tuffin, Vice Chair.

Councillors Bowie, Mrs Bowyer (Substitute for Councillor Monahan), Bowyer, Casey, James, Murphy, Mrs Nelder, Nicholson and Wigans.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Philippa Davey and Monahan.

Also in attendance: Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Pam Marsden (Assistant Director for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care), David Northey (Head of Finance), Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development), Giles Perritt (Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Candice Sainsbury (Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 6.45 pm.

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.

64. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillors Bowie and Bowyer declared a personal interest in minute number 72, as they were members of the cross party Child Poverty Working Group.

65. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

66. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

67. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

The Board considered the schedule of decisions made and noted the latest position.

With regard to the Corporate Plan 2012-2015 (minute 17), this item should not have been shaded out until it had been brought back to the Board for its consideration.

68. **CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins for consideration at this meeting.

69. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Chair reported that there had been one urgent executive decision relating to the challenge to the English GCSE results 2012.

The Chair advised that Cabinet had been requested to deal with this matter as an urgent decision because Counsel needed to know which councils would be parties to the proceedings in order to be able to lodge the papers with the court. A sum of £24,000 had been set aside within the school intervention budget for this purpose.

70. **NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The Board noted the update provided on the executive key decisions, as follows –

- (a) the new cooperative models for energy solutions item had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 January 2013;
- (b) the new models for green space management item had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 January 2013;
- (c) the traded services with schools item had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 November 2012;
- (d) the Marine Academy free school contract award item had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 11 December 2012;
- (e) the capital investment for replacement of minibuses item had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 November 2012;
- (f) the capital investment for the replacement of plant and equipment item had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 November 2012.

71. **LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair welcomed the Leader and the newly appointed Chief Executive, who were in attendance to report on Council and City issues; the Chair extended a warm welcome to the Chief Executive as this was the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that she had attended. The report highlighted the following main areas –

The Leader reported that –

- (a) the Plan for Jobs initiative remained on course to be launched in January 2013 and would be scrutinised by the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel;

- (b) Plymouth had been invited to compete for the second wave of the City Deals programme (which would devolve Government powers in exchange for responsibility for delivering growth locally); the Council would have until January 2013 to put forward its initial proposals.

The Chief Executive reported that –

- (c) the Council needed to be ‘fit for the future’ and that she was looking forward to leading it to the next stage of its development and to also build the organisation into a brilliant cooperative council;
- (d) there were significant challenges facing the Council, in particular, the delivery of its services with less money; this would result in the Council having to provide its services in a different way;
- (e) the City Deal would play a key part in the growth agenda for both the City and the region;
- (f) the overview and scrutiny process would be vital in supporting policy development and to ensure that the ‘checks and balances’ were in place to assist the Council to perform well;
- (g) there were already strong links with the Council’s partners across the City, although further integration work was required.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the Board, which included –

- (h) the Chief Executive saw her role on shared services, as a liaison role with partners and to look at sharing services across local authorities however, each partner would need to ensure that it made good business sense to do this;
- (i) the Chief Executive viewed her role in child poverty as being able to progress the work that had already been started, as this linked to the welfare reform agenda, and to also ensure that the child poverty strategy made a difference to the community;
- (j) officers would be made aware of the role and the importance of the overview and scrutiny process in the development of policies however, scrutiny would need to be able to demonstrate how policies had been improved through its recommendations;
- (k) the webcasting of the Council’s meetings would form a key part in delivering the Council’s commitment for Open Plymouth; scrutiny panels were encouraged to look at opportunities of holding meetings within the community;

- (l) the Leader gave an assurance to provide an update via the budget scrutiny process relating to Board's recommendation 'that the Cabinet seek and publish the partners' agreed approaches to the cooperative council ethos, including those of service delivery partners, such as Amey' (which arose from the Board's recommendations for the revised Corporate Plan 2012-2015);
- (m) a meeting had been arranged for the Leader to meet with the Transport Minister at the airport in January 2013; this would be a good opportunity for the Minister to be briefed on the connectivity issues facing the City (both road and rail); officers had met with representatives from Viable and continued to seek further information relating to their proposals; the decision to re-open the airport would need to be made by the private sector however, the Council would still be interested in any organisation that could meet the 'five tests';
- (n) the Chief Executive hoped that in 12 months' time she would be able to demonstrate that she had led the Council to the next stage of its development, by transforming itself and its services (the organisation needed to be built around its customers rather than in silos).

The Chair thanked the Leader and the Chief Executive for attending the meeting.

72. **CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Adviser submitted a progress update on the child poverty strategy (the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development and the Assistant Director for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care were also present for this item) which highlighted the following main issues –

- (a) the report provided an update on the Council's approach to developing a three year local child poverty strategy and action plan by April 2013; it included a comprehensive child poverty needs assessment which formed part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; it also outlined the approach being taken to ensure that the child poverty strategy for Plymouth was developed with full and inclusive involvement from key stakeholders and communities; this process had been endorsed by Cabinet on 11 September 2012 and was being led by the cross party Child Poverty Working Group;
- (b) the development of a local child poverty strategy sought to recognise and provide greater visibility and accountability that tackling child poverty was everyone's business;

actions to address both the causes of and the effects of child poverty were already integral to a number of key local plans and strategies such as the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 and the Housing Plan 2012-2017 and would need to link closely with the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Transport Strategy alongside activities for job creation, prevention and early intervention, families with a future, mitigating the impact of impending welfare reforms and other priorities outlined within the Corporate Plan 2012-13;

- (c) the child poverty strategy for Plymouth would feed into the upcoming Plymouth Plan, due to be endorsed in 2014, which would review the city's adopted Local Development Framework core strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy whilst seeking to build on and where possible combine the city's existing plan.

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

- (d) clarification would be provided relating to whether the 11,700 children identified as living in poverty were under the age of 16 or 18;
- (e) the footnote numbering would be amended;
- (f) in order to deal with the impact of the welfare reforms, realistic targets would need to be set; work would also need to be undertaken to identify the gaps and target resources; both Plymouth Community Homes and the police were already considering the impacts of these reforms;
- (g) a response would be provided outlining the reasons for the significant reduction in the number of economically inactive working age people in Plymouth.

Agreed that –

- (1) in order to consider the responses from the consultation, the child poverty strategy would be brought back to the Board for consideration at the end of January 2013;
- (2) additional information relating to the engagement, consultation and communications plan is fed back to the Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Adviser (ie other methods of communications and organisations not included as part of the consultation exercise).

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development and officers for attending.

73. **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Head of Finance advised that –

- (a) for the two months between the formal, full report, the Board would receive a monthly stand-alone high level report, which would cover the monitoring position by directorate, a summary of delivery plan progress and a summary of the capital programme;
- (b) the Board would also receive the formal quarterly report, which would consist of two joint performance and finance and two stand-alone finance reports;
- (c) monthly reports would be received as follows –
 - 12 December 2012
 - 30 January 2013
 - 13 March 2013
 - 27 March 2013
- (d) quarterly reports would be received in February and July 2013.

In response to a question raised by the Board relating to staffing information being included within the monthly finance report; work was currently being undertaken to provide staffing information.

Agreed that Panel Chairs will work with individual lead officers and scrutiny support officers to ascertain what information each Panel required, in order to undertake effective scrutiny.

The Board considered that each Panel would need to scrutinise the red and amber risks, although it was important to have an overview of all the risks.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Head of Finance for attending the meeting.

74. **FINANCE - CAPITAL AND REVENUE MONITORING REPORT (INCLUDING ADDITIONS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME TO BE APPROVED AT COUNCIL)**

The Head of Finance submitted a report on capital and revenue monitoring (including additions to the capital programme to be approved at Council) (Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance was also present for this item), which highlighted the following issues –

- (a) this was the second quarterly monitoring report for 2012-13 and outlined the finance monitoring position of the council as at the end of September 2012;

- (b) the primary purpose of the report was to detail how the council was delivering against its financial measures using its capital and revenue resources and to approve relevant revenue and capital budget variations and virements and the inclusion of new schemes to the capital programme where required;
- (c) the estimated revenue overspend was now showing as £3.221m, an increase of £1.432m in this quarter; the current estimated position showed an overspend of £3.215m across the People Directorate; an overspend of £0.863m in the Place Directorate; an overspend of £0.253m across Corporate Services Directorate; these overspends were offset in part by a small saving with the Chief Executive Officer of £0.010m and £1.1m of savings from corporate items;
- (d) the main reason for the overspend within the People Directorate were pressures totalling £3.151m in Adult Social Care linked to demographic changes, increased demand for supported living and reduced income from a number of sources; Plymouth was not alone in facing severe funding shortages as demand increased due to the aging population, with people living longer with disabilities or illness;
- (e) the council was currently forecasting a revenue over spend at year end of £3.221m against a net revenue budget of £203,766m; this equated to a net spend of £206,987m which was a variance of 1.6 per cent; this included corrective actions where identified to date; officers were still tasked with working with the relevant portfolio holders to identify further options for delivering a balanced budget;
- (f) in the budget report taken to Full Council in February 2012, the 2012/13 Capital Programme stood at £51.121m; following approval of new schemes, re-profiling and variations, the capital programme for 2012/13 was £60.481m following the September Council meeting; the latest forecast at the end of September 2012, was now £57.390m, which assumed approval of the recommendations for new schemes;
- (g) at the Cabinet meeting held on 13 November 2012 the recommendations contained with the report were agreed together with an additional two recommendations –
- the introduction of a staff incentive scheme, to engage all members of staff to put forward cost saving initiatives;
 - the re-introduction of a voluntary release scheme to allow staff to leave during the current financial year.

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

- (h) Cabinet had noted that in the light of the emerging pressure in Adult Social Care, the Chief Executive had commissioned a full review of all demographic pressures across the council; once a full understanding of this situation had been gained, consideration could be given as to the measures required to address this matter; in order to assist in addressing the deficit, the planned cuts for the 2013/14 would be brought forward for the whole of the council;
- (j) although there had been an inflationary increase, it was hoped that there would not be a significant rise in the cost of council tax;
- (k) monies in the sum of £100,000 had been accrued from the enforcement of the use of bus lanes;
- (l) assets such as land and buildings would be reviewed to ascertain the level of work required to realise their full sales potential on the open market; it was more prudent for the council to use its own resources in order to achieve a more advantageous return when the asset was marketed.

75. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board endorsed and agreed the following recommendations –

- (1) with regard to Children and Young People OSP –
 - confirmation of the inclusion of the following items on the work programme –
 - ▶ early interventions
 - ▶ youth justice plan
 - ▶ sickness levels
 - ▶ government policy changes
 - ▶ youth service to be looked at in January and March 2013
- (2) with regard to Customers and Communities OSP -
 - the appointment of Steve Meakin (Money Advice Co-ordinator Devon and Cornwall, Citizens Advice Bureau), as a co-opted representative on the Panel;
 - the approval of the Compact and relationship between Plymouth City Council and the voluntary and community sector Project Initiation Document;
 - the appointment of Sue Benjamin-Fast (Business and Development Manager, Cornwall Council Shared Services Manager) for the Library Modernisation Task and Finish Group.

With regard to Adult Health and Social Care OSP, the recommendations arising from the meeting on NHS regional pay were noted.

76. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Panels were submitted for consideration and approval.

77. **PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTS (PIDS)**

The Board agreed the Compact and relationship between Plymouth City Council and the voluntary and community sector project initiation document submitted by the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and noted project initiation document on the promote responsibility minimise harm – Plymouth's alcohol strategy submitted by the Adult Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

78. **TASK AND FINISH UPDATES/REPORTS**

The Board agreed the Social Fund Replacement report submitted by the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

79. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

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