

Co-operative Scrutiny Board

Wednesday 26 March 2014

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Darcy, Philippa Davey, Sam Leaves, Murphy, Kate Taylor and Tuffin.

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Patrick Hartop (Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Officer), Phil Morgan (Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Officer), David Northey (Head of Finance), Giles Perritt (Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), David Trussler (Interim Strategic Director for Corporate Services), Councillor Williams (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 6.20 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.

130. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillor Samantha Leaves, declared a personal interest as she was employed by NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group Western Locality.

131. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014 are confirmed, subject to the amendment to Councillor Jon Taylor's name (minute 117 refers).

132. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair raised concerns relating to information being circulated at short notice. This situation did not afford councillors the opportunity to fully read the information and as such unable to make informed decisions.

A discussion took place relating to the specific reasons as to why the reports and information were provided as 'to follow items'. Whilst every effort was made to circulate information in a timely manner, there were occasions when this was not always possible to achieve. It was stressed that this was in no part the fault of the Democratic Support Unit.

The Board agreed that this issue is raised with the Council Management Team, an action plan is drafted to address these issues and the Scrutiny Lead Officer report back to its next meeting.

The Chair informed the Board that there had been the following three urgent executive key decisions –

- preparation for and implementation of the Council's Transformation programme;
- Plan for the City Centre;
- Taylor Maxwell House, 165-171 Armada Way and 67-85 Mayflower Street, Plymouth.

The Chair advised that he had requested officers to attend this meeting to provide an overview relating to the Plan for the City Centre and Taylor Maxwell House.

(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 inform Members).

133. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The work programmes of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and the Caring Plymouth Panel were submitted for consideration and approval.

The Board agreed its work programme together with the Caring Plymouth Panel's work programme.

134. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

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

135. **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The Board considered the following executive key decisions in the Forward Plan which were scheduled to be discussed at the Cabinet meetings between 10 March 2014 and 10 July 2014 –

- concession for a wireless network in Plymouth;
- disposal of land for development at Plymouth International medical and Technology Park;
- fairer charging;
- review of local development scheme and Plymouth Plan programme;
- award of the Plymouth Strategic Material Recycling Facility contract and approve of the city wide roll out of doorstep glass recycling;
- designation of Ham and Radford Woods as local nature reserves and an extension to Efford march local nature reserve;
- children's centre contract award;
- Strategic Economic Plan Heard of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership;

- award of building contract for Langage employment units and to agree any associated financial increases within the capital programme;
- review and prioritisation of the capital programme.

The Board agreed that the fairer charging item would be scheduled into the Board's work programme for consideration (this item would be submitted to Cabinet on 17 June 2013 and would not be available to scrutinise prior to June 2014).

It had been agreed at Full Council on 31 March 2014 that the review and prioritisation of the capital programme would be included in the Corporate Monitoring report, which was submitted to the Board on a monthly basis.

136. **CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins to consider.

Order of Business

With the permission of the Chair, the order of business on the agenda was amended, as set out below in the minutes.

137. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE (K40)**

The Board received an overview of the work being undertaken to achieve key action 40, relating the lobbying of Government, working with LEPs and neighbouring authorities. The Board was advised that -

- (a) the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal had been signed in January 2014; this had been achieved as a result of working with the Council's partners, local authorities and major businesses across the region;
- (b) key elements of the Deal included –
 - the creation of over 10,000 jobs, growth for 25,000 businesses and the release of land by the Ministry of Defence at Devonport's South Yard. This area would be transformed into a marine industries production campus;
 - a substantial business support package to assist existing businesses to flourish and attract new investors;
 - investing in the skills and providing support for young people;
- (d) the Council together with other local authorities and LEPs, had been lobbying Government regarding rail resilience across the region; both the Leader and Chief Executive had provided evidence to the Transport Select Committee at Westminster;

- (e) the Council was also lobbying Government to secure the future of the Naval Base at Devonport relating to the proposed reduction in the fleet over the next 10 years;
- (f) the Council was entering into a new phase of working with Government by adopting an intensive lobbying strategy.

The Chair thanked Patrick Hartop (Senior Policy, Performance and Partnerships Officer) for his overview.

138. **CORPORATE MONITORING REPORT**

The Board received the Corporate Monitoring report which outlined the finance monitoring position of the Council as at February 2014. The Head of Finance provided an overview of the report, which outlined the following key areas –

- (a) the revenue forecast year end overspend was £0.885m;
- (b) a worsening position had been reported for Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care, which was attributed to the following –
 - unexpected sustained pressures, winter and summer ‘spikes’ from Derriford Hospital;
 - an increase in the overall number and cost of Supported Living Learning Disability clients (with increasing complexities of needs and increases to care home fees);
 - ongoing utility pressure following rebasing of consumption at the Life Centre;
- (c) there had been a total of 131 expressions of interest which had been received relating to the voluntary release scheme; 46 were currently being processed and the costs should these applicants wish to continue with the process would be £0.321m;
- (d) to date a total of 55 employees had left the authority, as a result of redundancies, at a cost of £0.806m during this year;
- (e) there had been a slight increase in the number of days sickness, 8.49 days, against a target of 7.59 days.

In response to a question raised by Members it was anticipated that a balanced budget (within £200k) would be achieved at the year end.

139. **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (with responsibility for Transformation) together with the Interim Strategic Director for Corporate Services provided an overview of the proposed Transformation Programme including the Outline Business Cases for the five elements of the Programme. The Board was advised that –

- (a) the Council faced an indicative funding shortfall of £64.5m over the next three years, which had forced it to fundamentally transform the way in which it undertook its business and demanded a new approach to sustainable budget setting;
- (b) the role of scrutiny was vital in providing both support and critical challenge; as part of this process it was important for the Board to undertake pre decision scrutiny, as well as having an overview of how projects overlapped and key decisions flowing from this process; in order to assist with this work, resourcing capacity had been built into this process, whereby the appropriate level of support would be provided by the programme leads;
- (c) financial information relating to the Transformation Programme would be included within the Corporate Monitoring report which was submitted to the Board on a monthly basis;
- (d) an undertaking was given to provide the list of 19 projects contained within the Outline Business Cases;
- (e) during 2014-15 it was intended that a minimum of 75 percent of all resources utilised across the Transformation programmes and project would be provided by existing staff who would be supported through comprehensive training and mentoring facilitated by expert external resources.

In response to questions raised by Members, it was reported that –

- (f) forty-seven members of staff were currently employed with a total of 17 vacancies (which would be filled); a number of senior consultants were also employed, although this number would reduce with capacity being built with the Council's own staff;
- (g) formal training programmes were in place for staff which included 'on the job' training;
- (h) the performance and risks associated with the Programme were closely monitored on a monthly basis by the Transformation Portfolio Board (this information was broken down on a project by project basis);
- (i) the final considerations of the Fairness Commission would be taken on board;
- (j) as with any Council decision, equality impact assessments would be undertaken as and when required as projects were developed for implementation.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Interim Strategic Director for Corporate Services for attending the meeting.

140. **BUDGET SCRUTINY PROPOSALS 2014-2015**

The Board received a report on the budget scrutiny proposals 2014-2015 which outlined proposals for changing how the council's budget would be scrutinised during 2014/15 with a view to making the process more effective and efficient. The Senior Policy, Performance and Partnership Officer provided an overview of the report, which outlined the following key areas –

- (a) this had been the first time that a three year budget had been scrutinised in order to address the £65m funding gap;
- (b) concerns had been raised by members relating to the difficulties in assessing and understanding some of the budget information within tight timescales;
- (c) the objectives of the proposed approach were as follows, to –
 - hold the executive to account throughout 2014/15 year over the delivery of the savings and efficiency targets set out in the three year budget;
 - add value to the existing Council processes of budget setting and monitoring by ensuring that the views of all stakeholders (partners, staff and residents) were captured and used to challenge the Council's budget throughout the year;
 - constructively challenge the Council's proposals for the second and third years of the current three year budget cycle;
- (d) a proposed approach had been drafted to address the following key issues –
 - what information should the Board receive to help it scrutinise the budget?
 - when should this information be provided?
 - who should provide it?
 - what is the purpose of the information?
- (e) the provision and assessment of the relevant information during the year should enable the Board, by the end of December, to select specific issues that it wished to scrutinise in further detail at the Budget Scrutiny sessions; it was anticipated that this would result in a shorter budget scrutiny event.

The Board agreed to implement the proposals as outlined in the report.

141. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure provided the 'vision' for the Plan for the City Centre and Taylor Maxwell House 165 -171 Armada Way and 67-85 Mayflower Street, Plymouth.

In response to questions raised by Members, it was reported that –

- (a) a number of sites had been scoped relating to the relocation of the Bretonside bus station but this site (Mayflower West car park) had been identified as being deliverable;
- (b) there were no plans to demolish the shops on either side of the entrance to the proposed coach hub, in order to widen the access; initial 'tracking' analysis had been undertaken which showed easy access to the site (the bridge and its supporting stanchions would be removed);
- (c) initial discussions had been held with both coach operators and passenger groups relating to the proposed relocation of the bus station; both parties supported the design and had expressed a wish to be involved with the process;
- (d) following the completion of a 'demand' analysis relating to the provision of the IMAX cinema facility within the City, the analysis had shown that there was a demand (this included the proposed cinema complex at the Home Park development);
- (e) it was anticipated that the demolitions works for the Mayflower West car park would be completed by the end of September 2014;
- (f) there were a number of bus services that currently used Bretonside, however under the proposals, these services would need to be relocated; it was proposed to create one extra stop along the viaduct and a bus stop at St Andrews Cross; these works would be complete prior to any construction works of the scheme being started;
- (g) an undertaking was given to investigate the feasibility of using the drop off zone outside of the Theatre Royal, as a designated bus stop, in order to alleviate the congestion along Royal Parade;
- (h) following consideration of the proposals by Cabinet, it had recommended that the Working Plymouth Panel scrutinised the plans for the coach hub.

The Board noted the decisions.

142. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board endorsed and agreed the recommendations as submitted by the Caring Plymouth Panel.

143. **CO-OPERATIVE REVIEW**

The Board agreed that the recommendations outlined in the unauthorised encampments scrutiny report are referred to Cabinet for consideration.

144. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt urgent business.