

Co-operative Scrutiny Board

Wednesday 22 October 2014

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Vice Chair, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Beer, Vice Chair.

Councillor Bowie, Mrs Bowyer (substitute for Councillor Darcy), Philippa Davey, Mrs Foster (substitute for Councillor Sam Leaves), Jordan, Murphy, Parker, Ricketts (substitute for Councillor James) and Kate Taylor.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Darcy, James and Sam Leaves and Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive).

Also in attendance: Ross Jago (Performance and Research Officer), Chris Randall (Head of Finance Operations) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.10 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.

63. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

The Board agreed that Councillor Mrs Beer is appointed as vice chair for this particular meeting.

64. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

65. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that Ofsted inspectors had arrived to inspect the council's effectiveness of its services for children and young people.

The Chair took this opportunity to welcome Councillor Parker to her first meeting of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

(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 councillors).

66. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The work programme for the Co-operative Board, Ambitious Plymouth Panel and the Working Plymouth Panel were submitted for consideration and approval.

At the last meeting of the Board, it agreed that collaborative enforcement would be scrutinised by the Working Plymouth Panel (as originally it formed part of the Brilliant Co-operative Street Services concept); however it had been removed from the transformation programme and was being led by the Public Protection Service and as such sat with the Your Plymouth Panel.

A discussion took place relating to the relevance of including updates on work programmes. It was considered that where appropriate written updates could be appended to tracking decisions and where possible emailed to members prior to the meeting. This would provide members with sufficient time to review the update, and if appropriate, liaise with the Chair as to whether the officer(s) should attend the meeting (it would be at the Chair's discretion, as to whether officer(s) would be invited to attend the meeting).

The Board agreed –

- (1) its work programme subject to progressing the meeting with the City's MPs;
- (2) the provisional meeting scheduled for 3 December 2014 will be activated in order to prepare for budget scrutiny;
- (3) that budget scrutiny will take place over two days 12 and 14 January 2015 (the third date 7 January 2015 will at present remain in the diary to enable further budget preparation should it be required);
- (4) that all updates are removed from work programmes; written updates are to be appended to tracking decisions and where possible emailed to members prior to the meeting.

The Board further agreed –

- (5) that collaborative enforcement is removed from the Working Plymouth Panel's work programme and included on Your Plymouth Panel's work programme;
- (6) the work programme of the Working Plymouth Panel subject to the inclusion of the Growth Deal 2 (to include the implications for regional transport/City Deal) and Highways Maintenance (to include the future delivery of highways services as contained in the Forward Plan);

- (7) the work programme of the Ambitious Plymouth Panel subject to the inclusion of independent fostering/residential placements for children and young people and the preliminary outcomes of the Ofsted inspection.

66a. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

There were no decisions taken under delegated authority.

67. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

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

The Chair advised that with regard to minute 55 –

- (a) the Prevention and Intervention Strategy should be submitted to the Ambitious Plymouth Panel and not the Caring Plymouth Panel;
- (b) the high cost placements review together with the action plan would be considered as part of the budget scrutiny process.

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

The Board considered the following executive decisions in the Forward Plan which were scheduled to be discussed at Cabinet between November 2014 and January 2015 –

- Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service (PACLS) – business case;
- Co-operative Children and Young People's Services – updated business case;
- community domiciliary Care Services contract award;
- integrated commissioning – key decisions and next steps;
- integrated community health and social care delivery – key decisions and next steps;
- primary basic need awarding of contracts;
- contract award for the procurement of advocacy services;
- residential and nursing care home fair price for care.

The Chair advised a joint review would be held with the Caring Plymouth Panel and the Ambitious Plymouth Panel to scrutinise the integrated health and wellbeing transformation programme which would be held over two days (6 and 7 November 2014).

69. **CORPORATE MONITORING REPORT**

The Head of Finance Operations (Chris Randall) presented the corporate monitoring report (August 2014), which highlighted the following key points –

- (a) children's social care was currently showing an overspend of £2.367m; this position had worsened since July 2014 and could be attributed to the following -
- a significant increase in placements during the summer;
 - young people placed in independent foster care had increased by 12 to a total of 69, against a target budget of 60;
 - residential places had increased by 2 to 30 against a target budget of 18, with a significant number of these placements being high cost due to the complex nature of the children's needs.

An explanation was provided relating to the virements contained with revenue monitoring position table.

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

- (b) the target budgets relating to independent foster care and residential placements (as both of these areas were currently over target) would need to be reviewed;
- (c) in order to reduce the overspend within Children's Social Care key measures needed to be investigated such as what preventative care was being provided to prevent children from being taken into care and were there other ways of delivering support rather than placing children into foster care; analysis of the numbers and trends would need to be undertaken to ascertain whether there were opportunities to pre-buy places for independent foster care, as this would reduce costs.

The Chair thanked the Head of Finance Operations for attending the meeting.

70. **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Board received a report on the revised terms of reference for overview and scrutiny, which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) the proposed revisions to the terms of reference for the four Panels (Ambitious, Caring, Working and Your Plymouth Panels) reflected the changes within the local authority and partner organisations which had taken place since the restructure of the scrutiny function in 2013;
- (b) the revisions to the terms of reference would ensure a clear focus on the transformation programme and the activity which underpinned the Council's Corporate Plan;

- (c) corporate communications would become the responsibility of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board rather than the Ambitious Plymouth Panel;
- (d) the transformation programmes would be incorporated into the service areas so there would be no requirement to scrutinise transformation items separately.

The Board agreed that –

- (1) the revised terms of reference for the four panels (Ambitious, Caring, Working and Your Plymouth Panels) as set out in the report, with an amendment to remove the reference to the ‘transformation link’;
- (2) the revised terms of reference are submitted to Full Council on 24 November 2014 for approval and incorporated into the Council’s Constitution.

71. **FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR BUDGET SCRUTINY**

The Board received a report of the future arrangements for budget scrutiny 2015/16 which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) the report set out proposals for changing how the Council’s budget would be scrutinised by the Board during the 2015/16 financial year with a view to making the process more effective and efficient;
- (b) during the scrutiny of the Council’s budget in January 2014, the Board experienced difficulty in assessing and understanding some of the budget information within the tight timescales;
- (c) the costs incurred in scrutinising the budget over three day sessions had been estimated to be in the region of £5,000;
- (d) as in previous years, consultation would be undertaken with the business sector, voluntary and community sector, public and partners;
- (e) members of the Board would be invited to take part in training sessions which would allow members to familiarise themselves with the draft budget, identify areas for in-depth scrutiny and consider the impact of the Autumn Statement which would be announced on 3 December 2014.

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

- (f) it was anticipated that the agenda and supporting papers would be available on Wednesday 17 December 2014;

- (g) a representative from the Zebra/Octopus project would invited to be co-opted onto the Board to take part in the budget scrutiny process.

The Board agreed –

- (1) the proposed timetable for 2015/16 budget scrutiny, as outlined in paragraph 4.8 of the report; including the amendment to invite partners to attend specific sessions, rather than holding a dedicated partner session;
- (2) on-going in-year budget scrutiny should feature as part of the Panels' work programmes and the plans as outlined at 5.2 in the report are implemented.

72. **CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins to consider.

73. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Chair advised that Councillor James (Chair of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board) had signed two urgent executive decisions, as follows –

- award of construction contract for Bay View Caravan Site and Saltram Gateway Works, Plymouth (Cabinet Member for Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety);
- approval to complete the formal set up of Delt Shared Services Ltd and sign an ICT services agreement with the new company.

In response to a question raised, it was reported that a delay in awarding the construction contract, at this stage, would put £1.066m of funding at risk; the funding had been secured to support the refurbishment works from the Homes and Communities Agency.

The Board noted the urgent key decisions.

74. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board agreed the recommendation received from the Working Plymouth Panel to support the recommendations contained within the City Centre Business Improvement District ballot which will be submitted to Cabinet in December 2014.

75. **CO-OPERATIVE REVIEW(S)**

The Board considered and agreed the –

- (1) joint co-operative review request relating to the transformation programme for integrated health and wellbeing submitted by the Caring Plymouth Panel and the Ambitious Plymouth Panel;
- (2) co-operative review request relating to Be-Wise to Child Sexual Exploitation submitted by the Ambitious Plymouth Panel;
- (3) minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2014 to consider the Customer Services Strategy, submitted by the Your Plymouth Panel.

The Board agreed and recommended that the co-operative review into public funerals, submitted by the Your Plymouth Panel is considered by Cabinet.

76. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

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