



**PLYMOUTH**  
CITY COUNCIL

# **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2013/2014**



A report of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board  
on the achievements of Scrutiny for the  
2013/2014 municipal year

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## CO-OPERATIVE SCRUTINY BOARD

In commending the Annual Scrutiny Report 2013/14 to the Council, I want to highlight some of the achievements of scrutiny over the last municipal year and also to look to our joint plans for the coming year under the new scrutiny arrangements.

My thanks go to the Chairs, Vice Chairs, Members and Co-optees of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and Panels, who have been responsible for the work that scrutiny has undertaken over the past year. They have provided a vital counter-balance to the Executive of the Council, maintaining a constant vigilance over the quality of decision making, resource management and the maintenance of standards of service to the citizens of Plymouth.



Councillor James  
Chair of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board

### LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR

Following the City Council's approval in April 2013, the scrutiny function was modernised in order to improve its effectiveness and reflect the Council's co-operative values. This resulted in the creation of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and four panels –

- Ambitious Plymouth
- Caring Plymouth
- Working Plymouth
- Your Plymouth

One of the fundamental changes to the function was the appointment of the Chair for the Co-operative Scrutiny Board from the minority political group.

The focus of the function had changed; the reduction in the number of business meetings conducted by the panels allowed for more in depth reviews to be undertaken.

This had been a challenging year for the Council with the impact of the reduction of funding and an increase in demand for its services. As such, the Board had offered constructive challenge when monitoring the budget.

#### Budget Scrutiny

This was the first year that the Co-operative Scrutiny Board had been asked to scrutinise an indicative three year balanced budget 2014/15

to 2016/17. The Board had a responsibility to comment on whether the actions to address the financial gaps in order to achieve a balanced budget were robust and fit for purpose.

The sessions were delivered in a different way from previous years and were based around the Council's four Co-operative objectives, Pioneering Plymouth, Growing, Caring and Confident Plymouth structures rather than by departmental structures. Building on the success of the previous year, all three meetings were webcast to continue the Council's drive to make decision making more open and transparent.

During this process the Board heard from partner organisations, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members, directors and senior officers. Following the Board's robust challenge, it made a number of wide ranging recommendations to Cabinet, the majority of which were approved.

This would be the first year that the recommendations from budget scrutiny would be included within the quarterly corporate plan performance monitoring report.

Thanks had been given by the Leader for the considerable amount of work that the Board had undertaken and for the challenging sessions.

## Co-operative Reviews

The Board conducted a number of reviews looking at council tax (attachment of earnings), the redevelopment of the Civic Centre and future accommodation requirements, business rates – discretionary rate relief. As part of the council tax (attachment of earnings) the Board supported the proposal to reduce the minimum contribution that working age people paid towards their council tax bill from 25 percent to 20 percent and the proposal to reduce the fee charged when the Council made an application for a Council Tax Attachment of Earnings Order from £83 to £60. Both these recommendations were ratified by Cabinet and subsequently implemented.

## Cabinet Members

Over the past year, the Board has received regular updates from Cabinet Members on their respective portfolios. This has provided Board Members with an opportunity to ask in depth questions on areas of concern.

## Development

Over the past 12 months a scrutiny elearning training programme had developed which could be accessed by both Members and officers. The programme had been successfully launched and had received good feedback. It had been designed to provide an overview of the scrutiny arrangements that had been adopted by the Council. As with other elearning programmes a certificate was issued following the successful completion of the course.

An annual scrutiny conference was held in June 2013, which gave panels an opportunity to start to consider issues where the scrutiny process would be able to add value.

## Call-In

The Board held Cabinet to account by using the call in process to consider Cabinet Member decisions.

One call in had been received in 2013/14 relating to a purchase notice on land at the rear of Lucas Lane in Plympton. Following questioning of the responsible Cabinet Member and officers, the Board had agreed to implement the decision.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR

The forthcoming year will be challenging for the Council in implementing its transformation programme and achieving a balanced budget. The transformation programme will form an integral part of delivering the Council's co-operative values and objectives.

The role of scrutiny will be vital to the success of transformation and as such the focus of the Board and panel work programmes would be prioritised to ensure that they would provide constructive challenge and engagement.

The Board therefore agreed the allocation of the work streams, as follows –

- **Co-operative Scrutiny Board** – Co-operative Centre of Operations
- **Ambitious Plymouth** – People and Organisation Development
- **Caring Plymouth** – Integrated Approach to Health and Wellbeing
- **Working Plymouth** – Growth, Assets and municipal Enterprise
- **Your Plymouth** – Customer and Service Transformation

## AND FINALLY

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the achievements that we have made this year. The Chair and Vice Chairs of the panels, together with their lead offices and democratic support officers who have been fundamental in delivering a large and varied scrutiny work programme.

## AMBITIOUS PLYMOUTH PANEL

This section highlights the work, challenges and successes of the Ambitious Plymouth Scrutiny Panel in 2013/2014.

Councillor Bowie  
Chair of the Ambitious Plymouth Panel



### LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR

#### Dyslexia

It is vital that if a school identifies a child with a learning difficulty i.e. dyslexia or dyscalculia (difficulty with numbers) then the school will investigate the issue further, probably through the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), and put in place a specific programme that would assist the child with learning. A panel member agreed to champion the panel's work on dyslexia and meet separately with officers from the Education, Learning and Family Support Department and report back his progress to a future panel meeting.

#### Missing Young People's Team/ Integrated Youth Services – REACH

The Missing Young People's Team, renamed as REACH (Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home) was set up to provide an improved service to missing young people and protect them from harm or exploitation. REACH aims to deliver, in partnership with other services, a brief intervention service to children to reduce the likelihood of further running away and missing episodes as well as a reduction in risk taking behaviour and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The Be-Wise 2 Sexual Exploitation (BWise) programme trial with Year 9 students at Stoke Damerel Community College had been successful, and it was planned to continue this with other groups within the school.

#### Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care provides social work and social care support services for vulnerable children and young people in Plymouth. This includes all assessment work, children in need, children subject to Child Protection Plans and children in care. There have been a number of national developments in Children's Social Care which has brought about a number of key changes within the service, including the new Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance, which had led to changes in relation to multi-agency, safeguarding practices and a new single assessment replacing the current initial and core assessments; a move to embracing a national approach to adoption, meaning that local authorities move towards working together on finding adoptive parents rather than the current local authority based local approach; changes to the OFTSED inspection arrangements for safeguarding and looked after children and new arrangements for dealing with missing young people and child sexual exploitation.

Additionally, the service faced a number of key issues and challenges throughout the year which included an increase in referrals over the past year by 10 per cent; an increase in children subject to Child Protection Plans from 312 at the end of 2012 to 345 in mid-June; a small increase in the numbers of children in care and the ability to recruit permanent social work staff, although Plymouth had a successful recruitment process compared with national data.

#### City of Culture Bid

The Plymouth Culture Board led the city's bid for the UK City of Culture 2017. The bid had a very strong social media campaign, which, along

with some of the world class events that the city had hosted, significantly raised the city's profile. In total 11 cities bid for the City of Culture 2017, and only four cities were shortlisted for the next bid stage. Plymouth was not shortlisted but this did not deter Plymouth from carrying on its vision to establish itself as an ocean city with an excellent cultural offer and many events and initiatives had continued to be progressed to ensure this vision was achieved; some of the events and initiatives that Plymouth had been working on included the development of a history centre, the opening of a world class art exhibition, refurbishment of the Theatre Royal, guarantor for Ocean Studios and hosting a visit of the president of Massachusetts Senate.

### **Review of the Library & Museum Provision**

A review in to the city's library and museum provision highlighted the Council's commitment to the development of the city's museum and the creation of the Plymouth History Centre, a facility that will be three times the size of the city's current museum and will become a major cultural resource for the city to demonstrate the city's history and heritage and which will provide a much needed home for the city's record office. As part of the plans the city's central library will be relocated in a City Centre location and the allocated funding for the History Centre has the provision to enable this relocation. The History Centre project is to be funded from a bid to receive £12.5m of Heritage Lottery Funding, which is backed up by an agreed £5m of match funding from the Council and a further £3m funded from the Arts Council and other funding organisations; the History Centre is a significant project which will utilise the latest audio and visual technology and will become a major attraction for the city leading up to the transatlantic celebrations in 2020.

It is hoped that the facility would be open in early 2018; during the construction phase the existing library and museum buildings may need to be closed to the public but the service had an activity plan that would continue to allow access, perhaps at alternative locations, to the library and museums services.

### **School Transport Provision**

The transport budget has always been under pressure due to the responsive nature of the service. The Transport Team reviewed all routes including a reallocation of Passenger Assistants across all schools in order to reduce mileage costs, running time and Passenger Assistant hours. The Passenger Assistant budget was constantly under pressure due to the reactive nature of the work and has now been addressed.

### **Early Years Development**

The introduction of the free entitlement of 15 hours of early education for eligible two year olds from September 2013 had placed additional demand on childcare provision in Plymouth. A detailed needs analysis had been carried out and it was estimated that places for 270 children were needed to cater for the September 2013 target of 696 children; extensive work had been carried out within the childcare sector to encourage them to rearrange existing provision to cater for more two year olds, which had increased the number of places available to 430.

A total of £1.7m (including £500k from the DfE) had been allocated to the development programme, which had demonstrated the commitment to ensure our most vulnerable children had the best start in life. A shortage of places had been identified in the North West and South West of the city, where the majority of children eligible for the free entitlement (based on Free Schools Meal criteria) would live, based on analysis of live birth data, and a number of projects had been identified as key to ensuring there would be additional capacity for the projected 2014 target of 1400 children, when the eligibility for two year olds was extended.

### **School Admissions – allocation of reception places**

By law, children have to be provided with full time education by the term following their fifth birthday. In Plymouth, full time places are offered to children for the September

preceding their fifth birthday. The Council operates a co-ordinated scheme of admission at the reception intake as required by law and receives and makes offers on behalf of all admission authorities in the city. The panel were advised that there were sufficient primary school places available in Plymouth, but not necessarily in the desired schools. The birth rate in both Plympton and Plymstock had increased and it was acknowledged that this would create a problem in the future, and measures would be undertaken to alleviate this.

### **Mount Edgcombe House and Country Park**

The panel were advised that a three-year vision for the future of Mount Edgcombe was in place in order to identify and implement a series of measures which would create confidence and develop the resilience and sustainability of the house and park. It was hoped to maximise the opportunities of the park without compromising on its natural beauty and historical significance, and a number of innovative initiatives to generate income were being investigated. It was anticipated that within a few years the park would be self-sufficient and would no longer require a subsidy from Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Council.

### **Healthy Child Quality Mark scheme**

This scheme was a three-tier development tool which had evolved from the now defunct South West Healthy Schools Plus initiative which was piloted in 2009-2011. The scheme produced tangible results in a very short space of time. The panel were informed that schools were keen to engage in the scheme with 62 per cent of Plymouth schools involved in the scheme, and some schools had reported a shift in attitudes towards alcohol and tobacco, and an increase in healthy eating. There was concern for the durability of the scheme as there was a risk that it would end due to lack of funding at financial year end 2015.

### **Scrutiny reviews**

Narrowing the Gap - there is a national focus on reducing the gap between the attainment of pupils on free school meals (FSM) and their non-free school meals peers. The government's intention is to ensure that those children who began life with some social disadvantage are not disadvantaged further through under-performance in educational terms. The review expanded on this to also specifically focus on the attainment and take up of FSM from Looked After Children (LAC) and children from service families. Additionally the review addressed the concerns of the welfare reforms and its impacts on the eligibility of FSM and free school transport. Furthermore, the review considered the financial burden placed on parents of school-aged children from non-school uniform days and Proms.

### **LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR**

In 2014 – 2015 the panel will seek to promote the children and young people of the city further and improve services for children and young people by working in partnership with Cabinet Members, Senior Officers and external stakeholders and scrutinising issues including:

- REACH
- Safeguarding
- Children's Social Care
- Youth Services
- City of Culture Bid
- Plymouth Education Catering Services

In addition, the panel would be scrutinising the People and Organisational (POD) Transformation Programme.

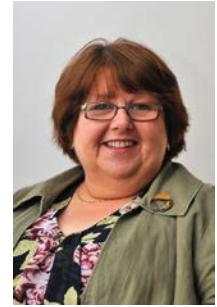
### **Scrutiny reviews**

The service and delivery of the 'Be-Wise to Sexual Exploitation' training programme will be reviewed in September in preparation for a review later in the municipal year.

## CARING PLYMOUTH PANEL

This section highlights the work, challenges and successes of the Caring Plymouth Scrutiny Panel in 2013/2014.

Councillor Mrs Aspinall  
Chair of the Caring Plymouth Panel



### Urgent Care

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHNT) was in the top half of trusts for performance of the 4 hour access standard for 2012/13. However, PHNT had failed to deliver the national standard for 4 hour access for two consecutive years. This coincided with a national deterioration in performance related to increase of patients arriving within emergency departments and an increase in the number of patients needing hospital admission. PHNT devised an action plan for improving performance within the emergency department monitored on a twice monthly basis. Performance had improved and there were robust continuity plans in place to avoid escalation.

### NHS III

NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) took the decision to delay the start of the NHS III service in Devon until September 2013. NHS Direct continued to provide the service in Devon until III went live. Delaying the launch of the service meant that the CCG would be able to spend more time learning from other areas that had already gone live and to understand how the new service would impact on the range of primary care and hospital services in the CCG catchment area. This enabled the CCG to fully scrutinise the services provided locally so that when NHS III was launched the system had been thoroughly tried and tested ensuring that the service offered was right for patients. The South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST) was awarded the contract to run the NHS III service and they have a good understanding of the local community. SWAST

extended an open invitation to the panel to visit the headquarters.

### Healthwatch Plymouth

Healthwatch Plymouth are an independent organisation championing the voice of local people of Plymouth on health and social care services. Colebrook (South West) Ltd was awarded the contract by Plymouth City Council to be the support service organisation for Healthwatch Plymouth. They have a knowledgeable team of staff delivering services across the city supported by a dedicated group of volunteers. The Steering Group oversees the delivery of the service, ensuring it achieves its statutory activities and manages resources well. The Steering Group is made up of members of the public, patient groups, community and voluntary sector groups. A representative from Healthwatch was invited to be part of the Pledge 90 review.

### Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Caring Plymouth panel received a presentation on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Director of Public Health at the request of the Health and Wellbeing Board led a task and finish group to produce the draft strategy and welcomed scrutiny's input into the preparation of the strategy.

### Disabled Parking at Derriford Hospital

The Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHNT) submitted an initial report to scrutiny in November 2012 outlining the proposed improvements they wished to make to its disabled car parking. Since November the (PHNT) worked closely with the Disabled Forum (consisting of Plymouth Wheelchair



Service User Group (PWSUG) and Plymouth Area Disability Action Network (PLYMDAN)) to design a car park that was suitable to meet the needs of disabled patients and visitors. Ann Pointon, Chair of Plymouth Area Disability Action Network was invited to attend scrutiny when PHNT submitted their plans. Subsequent meetings took place with the chair and vice chair outside of the meeting before final plans were submitted to the Trust Board.

### **Adult Social Care Budget**

The Caring Plymouth Panel had oversight of the Adult Social Care budget of £75.421m. They were told of the increasing demand in the cost of care packages due to the increasing complexity of need. In the light of these pressures the department was forecasting a year end overspend and in order to address this situation they had clear delivery plans and detailed balanced budget action plan which was monitored closely on a fortnightly basis.

### **Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF)**

The Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) for England, 2013-2016 was published in January 2012 by the Department of Health. It outlines the overarching vision for public health “to improve and protect the nation’s health and wellbeing, and improve the health of the poorest fastest. The Caring Plymouth panel receives the PHOF on a quarterly basis.

### **Carers Strategy and Dementia Strategy**

Plymouth City Council’s Carers Strategy and Dementia was due for refresh and the panel were given an overview of the changes to the strategies and the consultation process being used. The panel requested that review would take place before the strategies went to Cabinet.

### **Better Care Fund**

The Better Care Fund (previously referred to as the Integration Transformation Fund) was announced in June as part of the 2013 Spending Round. It provides an opportunity to transform

local services so that people are provided with better integrated care and support. The panel had oversight of the template prior to submission to the Department of Health.

### **Safeguarding Adults Board**

The Chair of Safeguarding Adults Board and Head of Safeguarding provided the panel with an overview of the Safeguarding Adults Board including membership of the board, governance arrangements and training provision.

### **Continuing Healthcare**

The panel received an overview on continuing healthcare and the assessment criteria for care packages for individuals who are not in hospital but have complex ongoing healthcare needs. The panel raised concerns over the accessing of information and the process followed for completing assessments. The panel agreed that links would be placed on the Plymouth Online Directory (POD) providing advice on how to claim continuing healthcare.

### **Children’s Health**

Public Health provided the panel with an overview of children’s health which included the child’s journey from conception to 19 years, reducing health inequalities and ensuring that every child has the best start to life.

### **Transformation Programme**

An overview was provided on the wider PCC transformation portfolio of programmes. The programme aims to engage with commissioning and delivery partners to establish a more collaborative, integrated and strategic approach to how the organisations commission and deliver services, by reducing costs, improving patient/service user experience and improving outcomes for residents in Plymouth as well as investing in preventative and early intervention services in order to reduce demand on higher cost community and bed based services, particularly acute services

**Pledge 90 Review**

A review of mental health services was undertaken and officers attended the Caring Plymouth panel to report findings in July and November. Following the November meeting the panel requested a further review to ensure that the review met the requirements of Pledge 90 and to identify whether there were

any gaps in information. The panel, in analysing all of the information submitted by officers, witnesses and users of the mental health services, agreed that the Review had met the requirements of Pledge 90 and made a number of recommendations to Cabinet via the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

## WORKING PLYMOUTH PANEL

As Chair of the Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel, I am proud to highlight the panel's achievements over the past year. The meetings have been well attended by Officers, Cabinet Members and Members of the scrutiny panel and Members have undertaken two reviews which have both added value.



Councillor Murphy  
Chair of the Working Plymouth Panel

### LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR

The panel has met on five occasions in the year 2013-2014, whilst also convening on a total of ten occasions for the Park and Ride Bus Service Scrutiny Review and for the Controlled Parking Zones: On Street Parking Scrutiny Review.

At the beginning of the year the panel was informed by the Director for Place that one of the biggest challenges facing the Place department, as well as the Council as a whole, was how services would be managed and delivered against ever decreasing budgets. Despite this a significant amount of work was being undertaken by Officers and Councillors to raise aspirations, deliver growth, reduce inequality and provide value for communities.

#### Affordable Housing Delivery

Members were advised that demand for housing that is affordable increasingly outweighs supply, and as more and more people struggle to find or afford homes the housing waiting list now stands at over 10,000 households; with over 2,500 identified as having a priority need for housing (bands A to C). The Plymouth Core Strategy and the Housing Plan set out strategic housing and planning objectives to increase the supply, mix and quality of new and affordable homes with the Corporate Plan prioritising accelerated housing supply to meet the housing needs of the city. The city's strong track record of affordable housing delivery is a reflection of the effective partnership working with partner Housing Associations and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) through the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership

(PHDP), developers and other housing providers. In comparison to other housing family groups and cooperative housing groups, Plymouth City Council compared well with regards to affordable housing delivery; Plymouth was seen as a top quartile performer.

#### Get Plymouth Building (GPB)

The Get Plymouth Building Initiative was launched in August 2012; the initiative contained eight initiatives to accelerate housing delivery including removing barriers to development to unlock stalled sites, to assist development proposals on lapsed sites, to support self-build developments and identify new funding mechanisms to maximise government funding opportunities. The panel was informed that the aim of the programme was to deliver over 2,100 homes and over 800 jobs in local construction and supply chains over the next 2-3 years by taking an innovative approach to housing and planning for homes; this in turn would lead to a boost in regeneration momentum in the city. So far 231 homes had been completed, 1,097 homes were currently under construction and projections indicated that more than 1,659 further homes would be brought forward under this initiative in the next 2/3 years. At the time of its launch GPB was estimated to have a total value of development benefitting the local economy of £213.7 million.

#### Park and Ride Bus Service Review

Throughout 2013 – 2014 several Members from the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel (including other Members that raised an interest to be a part of this piece of scrutiny) undertook a review into the current Park and

Ride Bus Service. The review identified that the current bus service, whilst valued by the majority of customers as an efficient and direct service from Milehouse, the George Interchange and Coypool was in need of changes in order to aid the interests of customers and the Council. Recommendations from the review were submitted to Cabinet in February 2014 and several actions, including the needs for Officers to investigate the feasibility for a new park and ride bus service to be introduced between Milehouse and Derriford Hospital, and to renegotiate departure charges were endorsed. Cabinet praised Councillor Murphy, as Chair of the review, for her work, together with the scrutiny group members and all those who supported the review. The Leader also indicated that work had already started to provide improved journey planning and timetable information at each of the park and ride sites and that the work should be complete by the end of March 2014.

### **Controlled Parking Zones: On Street Parking Review**

Members from the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel also undertook a review into Controlled Parking Zones: On Street Parking and successively developed a draft criteria to be used by Council Officers when implementing future CPZs. The review identified that there

was a great deal of frustration and confusion linked with residential parking in the city as Plymouth currently had 53 CPZ comprising of a total of 22 variations as to when parking restrictions applied. Cabinet Members agreed to the list of recommendations submitted to the 15 July 2014 Cabinet meeting for the adoption of a Controlled Parking Zone policy and thanked the review group for their hard work in compiling the policy which would define when a Controlled Parking Zone was an appropriate tool to help resolve parking difficulties within residential areas.

### **LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR**

In 2014 – 2015 municipal year the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel will seek to improve services for all Plymouth's citizens by working in partnership with Cabinet Members, Senior Officers and external stakeholders and scrutinising issues including:

- Market Recovery Scheme
- Parking Strategy
- Strategic Property Review
- Plan for the Mayflower Coach Hub

The Council's Transformation Programme is also likely to feature heavily in the panel's work programme.

## YOUR PLYMOUTH PANEL

This section highlights the work, challenges and successes of the Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel in 2013/2014.



Councillor Ian Tuffin  
Chair of the Your Plymouth Panel

### LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR

The panel met on five occasions in the year 2013 – 2014, whilst also convening on four occasions as the 'Unauthorised Encampments and Public Funerals Co-operative Scrutiny Reviews'.

The achievements of the Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel over the past year have been summarised under four separate categories:

- Strategy and Policy Development
- Reducing Inequality
- Improving Service Delivery
- Partnership and Stakeholder Working

#### Strategy and Policy Development

Licensing Act Statement of Licensing Policy and Introduction of the Late Night Levy – members considered the Policy which was being reviewed following the Government's introduction of a number of additional controls which amended the Licensing Act. These new controls provided the Council with additional opportunities to exercise greater local discretion on licensing matters and control the negative aspects of the consumption of alcohol in the evening and night time economy (ENTE).

Tree Management – following establishment of a new policy in 2012, the panel were consulted as part of a 12-month review process. As a result, Members were advised that significant improvements had been made in the Tree Management service, including –

- a reduction in waiting times from two years to six months;

- better partnership working with developers to ensure that development proposals which included provision for tree planting would not present problems in the future;
- the ability for councillors to use their community grant funding to assist their constituents in dealing with tree-related issues.

Roadside Memorials – there was a growing trend for people who had lost loved ones in fatal accidents to adopt 'temporary' roadside memorials. With some sites being more prominent than others and being in-situ for quite some time (sometimes years), the level of impact on those living nearby or passing was becoming an increasing concern to the Council. The establishment of a strategy or policy on how to deal with these situations was therefore appropriate and the panel was consulted on the draft guidance to be implemented.

Public Funerals – Local Authorities have a legal duty under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 to 'cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who dies or has been found dead, within its area, in any case where it appears to the local authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the local authority.' The cost to the Council for each Public Funeral was in the region of £2000 to £2200, but could be more, depending on the time spent investigating the case. Traditionally, the older generation had made provision in their wills for their funeral arrangements but this was no longer the case and, with the number of public funerals set to rise, combined with existing and ever-increasing budget it was essential that the Council looked at ways of making better use of

it resources. With this in mind, the panel undertook a co-operative review into Public Funerals and made a number of recommendations which are shortly to be considered by Cabinet.

### **Reducing Inequality**

Emergency Welfare Scheme (Social Fund Replacement) – In April 2013 the Social Fund was abolished and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) handed partial funding to Local Authorities to design and deliver a localised welfare assistance scheme. Through a co-operative review process, the panel had opportunity to advise the Council on the delivery options for the new scheme and, having made a number of recommendations, the panel received a number of updates throughout 2013 – 2014 monitoring progression of the new scheme's implementation.

Unauthorised Encampments – following a number of high-profile incidents in the City, the panel undertook a co-operative review which looked at the procedures used by the Council when dealing with unauthorised encampments. The co-operative review clarified current processes and procedures against a backdrop of legal, social and financial considerations in an attempt to ensure community cohesion and reassure the public in regard to future incidents. The panel will monitor the situation throughout 2014 – 2015.

### **Improving Service Delivery**

Customer Services Transformation – the panel has been involved in helping to shape the Council's vision and principles for a new and improved customer experience. This includes:

- Provision of a single point of access to most services;
- Resolution of most customer enquiries at first point of contact;
- Engaging customers in the redesign of services to make them more efficient and effective;

- Delivering services through preferred channels to make them more accessible and deliver savings;
- making effective and efficient use of the Council's investment in corporate customer facing ICT;
- working with partners to make services more customer focused, better connected and more efficient.

### **Partnership and Stakeholder Working**

The panel's terms of reference maintain strong links to the Safer Plymouth Partnership Board (formerly the Community Safety Partnership) and the Police and Crime Panel. Regular updates are provided to the panel on the latest crime statistic for the city and this performance is monitored against the following five targets –

- closing the gap in overall crime
- acquisitive crime
- violence with injury
- criminal damage
- anti-social behaviour

## **LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR**

In the 2014 – 2015 municipal year the panel will continue to improve services for all Plymouth's citizens by serving as a 'critical friend' to Cabinet Members and working in partnership with external stakeholders and partners through scrutiny and monitoring of a number of issues, including –

- Customer Service Strategy (Transformation) – co-operative review
- Personal Problem Debt – co-operative review
- Public Funerals
- Unauthorised Encampments
- Crime Statistics
- Framework for Working with Citizens and Communities (workshops)

# MEMBERSHIP OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SCRUTINY BOARD AND PANELS

Co-operative Scrutiny Board	Ambitious Plymouth Panel	Caring Plymouth Panel	Working Plymouth Panel	Your Plymouth Panel
 <p>Chair – Councillor David James</p>	 <p>Chair – Councillor Sally Bowie</p>	 <p>Chair – Councillor Mary Aspinall</p>	 <p>Chair – Councillor Pauline Murphy</p>	 <p>Chair – Councillor Ian Tuffin</p>
 <p>Vice Chair – Councillor Mary Aspinall</p>	 <p>Vice Chair – Councillor Terri Beer</p>	 <p>Vice Chair – Councillor David James</p>	 <p>Vice Chair – Councillor Ian Darcy</p>	 <p>Vice Chair – Councillor Sam Leaves</p>
<p>Councillor Terri Beer Councillor Sally Bowie Councillor Ian Darcy Councillor Phillipa Davey Councillor Sam Leaves Councillor Pauline Murphy Councillor Kate Taylor Councillor Ian Tuffin</p>	<p>Councillor Sam Davey Councillor Ian Gordon Councillor Paul Jarvis Councillor Glen Jordan Councillor Martin Leaves Councillor Patricia Nicholson Councillor Lorraine Parker Councillor David Stark Councillor Bill Stevens Councillor Mike Wright Edith Bayley and Clare Hamon Co-opted Representative</p>	<p>Councillor Mrs Foster Councillor Mike Fox Councillor Ian Gordon Councillor Dr John Mahony Councillor Grant Monahan Councillor Lorraine Parker Councillor Steve Ricketts Councillor Jon Taylor Councillor Kate Taylor Councillor Mike Wright</p>	<p>Councillor David Haydon Councillor Martin Leaves Councillor Michael Leaves Councillor Jonny Morris Councillor Jean Nelder Councillor Patrick Nicolson Councillor Dr David Salter Councillor Chaz Singh Councillor John Smith Councillor George Wheeler</p>	<p>Councillor Casey Councillor Danny Damarell Councillor Phillipa Davey Councillor Paul Jarvis Councillor Glen Jordan Councillor Martin Leaves Councillor Michael Leaves Councillor Eddie Rennie Councillor Steven Ricketts Councillor Tina Tuohy Steve Meakin Co-opted Representative</p>