

Co-operative Scrutiny Board

Decisions Taken Under Delegated Authority



Co-operative Scrutiny Board – Budget Scrutiny Review

On 12 and 14 January 2015 the Board undertook the review of the delivery of the co-operative vision within a four year sustainable budget.

The budget scrutiny report (including the recommendations) were agreed by the Lead Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair under delegated authority.

Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

R1	Further information on the reduction in Local Government Settlement and assumed impact on the City Council revenue budget is reported to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board on the 18 February 2015.	Cabinet	Agreed. The Settlement notified to PCC late December was in line with the modelling we had been using for the production of the Indicative Budget presented to Scrutiny in January. Finance is happy to provide further detail to the Board at their meeting 18 th February 2015.
R2	Cabinet seeks reassurance from the Department for Work and Pensions that the authority will be able to claw back housing benefit overpayments, without undue delays, when the benefit transfers to universal credit.	Cabinet	Agreed. Plymouth City Council already has a very good working relationship with colleagues within DWP and is working closely around the impact of the introduction of the Universal Credit. We will actively seek reassurance on housing benefit overpayments.
R3	All cabinet members hold staff surgeries, as undertaken by Councillor Jon Taylor, to discuss the transformation programme and future challenges the council faces.	Cabinet	<p>Communication and consultation with staff continues to be the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service.</p> <p>Cabinet will continue to listen to the views of staff, a voice which is particularly important when we require staff support to enable the transformation of the Council. Over the previous twelve months we have met with staff across the organisation to listen to their ideas and concerns for the future.</p> <p>However, a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not lead to appropriate engagement with staff and members of the cabinet will continue to work with officers to engage with staff in the most effective way possible.</p>

R4	The voluntary and community sector are involved in the planning stage for the development of alternative service delivery vehicles.	Cabinet	We already have undertaken extensive engagement and co-design with communities in line with co-operative commissioning principles outlined in the City Council's Co-operative Commissioning policy. We believe that people who use services are in the strongest position to identify how well they are performing, what changes need to be made, and what future provision needs to look like. However the council must continue to adhere to procurement and commissioning regulations. If community groups who helped plan alternative service delivery vehicles become the provider it could leave the council open to legal challenge which jeopardises the efficient use of tax payers' money. We will continue to work with communities to co-design commissioning intentions where possible.
R5	A revised approach to be considered for the staff survey to address poor return rate. This should include a review of the staff appraisal system to ensure it can be used as a key tool in the two way communication with staff.	Cabinet	The Staff Survey return rates were disappointing for 2014 and officers are currently reviewing how the process can be improved. Reform of the staff appraisal system is a work stream within the People and Organisational Development Programme and details will be provided to the relevant Board / Panel when available.
R6	Protocols to assist those with additional needs are included within all debt enforcement and collection policies.	Cabinet	Agreed. We already work very hard to protect the more vulnerable members of the city as evidenced by our Council Tax Support Scheme. We continue to work with those less able to meet their obligations to help with payment plans.
R7	In support of recommendations from Your Plymouth, the results of the library review are reported to that panel alongside the timescales for changes to the service and alignment to the community engagement framework.	Cabinet	Agreed.

R8	Economic Development officers will undertake further advocacy with the Local Enterprise Partnership to gain further funding from the European Social Fund.	Cabinet	Agreed. Economic Development Officers continue to work closely with the Cabinet and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership how Plymouth and the region can benefit from European funding streams amongst others.
R9	Economic Development officers will undertake further advocacy with the Local Enterprise Partnership to gain further funding for those with disabilities and mental health issues to assist them in finding appropriate employment.	Cabinet	Agreed. Economic Development Officers and the City Council's lead officer for skills will continue to work closely with the Cabinet, Employment and Skills Board and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership how Plymouth residents with additional needs can benefit from available funding streams. This will be undertaken within our co-operative principles with the community, voluntary and community sector and the wider city partnerships.
R10	Detailed terms of reference of the Plymouth and Western Locality Integrated Commissioning Board, including membership and protocols in relation to the management of the Section 75 agreement, should be provided to Caring Scrutiny ahead of a decision to pool budgets being taken at Cabinet in March.	Cabinet	Agreed. Information will be provided to the panel in March.
R11	The details of the Section 75 agreement are reported to the Board before the Cabinet agrees the pooled budget in March 2015 to ensure that the NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Groups contribution over a 5 year period will demonstrate how the pace of change arrangements will deliver an accurate and fair level of capitation for Plymouth which is appropriately weighted to deliver for the city's unique demographic.	Cabinet	Agreed. Information will be provided to the panel in March.
R12	The City Council supports and lobbies the Government for multi-year funding settlements for Clinical Commissioning Groups.	Cabinet	Agreed.

R13	The Caring Plymouth scrutiny panel, using statutory duties under the National Health Act 2006, requests NHS England and the Trust Development Agency to provide the PWC report into the Devon Challenged Health Economy for consideration at the panel.	Caring Scrutiny Panel	Noted.
R14	Social care thresholds should be widely communicated amongst partners and brought to greater prominence on the council's website in an easy to use format so that partners and members of the public can review thresholds before making a referral.	Cabinet	The City Council provides training for professionals and communities on social care thresholds. Details of the thresholds are available on the city council website which will be reviewed to investigate whether they could be brought to greater prominence.
R15	The issue of Child Poverty is given greater prominence within the Plymouth Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Board should consider Child Poverty as a priority issue within its work programme.	Cabinet	Noted. A consultation process is currently underway for the Plymouth Plan and the Cabinet will work with key partners across the City to ensure that key shared priorities are reflected strongly within the plan.
R16	Young Carers should be considered a priority issue within the Children and Young People's Partnership work programme. The partnership should review the findings of the 2010 scrutiny review of the issue to ensure they have been implemented.	Children and Young People's Partnership	Noted.
R17	Where significant changes to benefit profile of transformation programme work streams occur these must be reported to the relevant panel Chair for consideration in the scrutiny work programme.	Cabinet	Agreed.
R18	That the Director for Transformation and Change, when formally in post, considers the creation of a comprehensive risk mitigation plan for the Transformation Programme for consideration at the Cooperative Scrutiny Board as part of ongoing monitoring of the Transformation Programme.	Cabinet	A comprehensive risk management and mitigation process has been in place since the inception of the transformation programme. Details of risk mitigation plan will be provided to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board as part of the Corporate Monitoring Report.
R19	Figures on the proportion of sickness absence relating to stress are reported to the Board as part of the corporate monitoring report.	Cabinet	Agreed.

R20	<p>The Co-operative Scrutiny Board requests the support of Cabinet to undertake a full review of the partnerships currently at work in the City with a view to ensure that the all partners are appropriately resourcing them.</p>	Cabinet	<p>The Cabinet Member for Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety highlighted during budget scrutiny that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) could provide more funding for the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The PCC has indicated that Devon and Cornwall Police may need to shrink to fewer than 3,000 officers. Given that senior Police Officers believe 3,000 is the minimum number required to effectively police the region the Your Plymouth Panel should consider how the Community Safety Partnership will in future be funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner to prevent crime, provide assurance in Plymouth communities and reduce pressure on hard working front line Police Officers.</p> <p>Cabinet does not agree with the Co-operative Scrutiny Board that wider review of partnerships should be undertaken. Given the pressures felt within the local authority, due to a reducing budget settlement from central government, the Overview and Scrutiny function should focus its attention on the work being undertaken within Plymouth City Council and assist Cabinet in the development and review of policies which benefit the citizens of Plymouth.</p>
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R21	That the Corporate Management Team build on the success of shared service with the Health Service and continue to identify opportunities for shared services with neighbouring local authorities.	Cabinet	Plymouth City Council has a good track record in working with other local authorities on the peninsula to get the best deal for tax-payers; one example of this would be the Devon Business Rates Pool which has seen significant benefits for the City. Cabinet Members and Chief Officers will continue to explore with neighbouring authorities areas on which we can work together for mutual benefit.
R22	The draft Plymouth Plan will be delegated to panels for scrutiny within their terms or reference.	Scrutiny Panels	Noted.