

Your Plymouth

Monday 12 October 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Jordan, in the Chair.

Councillor Kate Taylor, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Churchill, Damarell, Drean, K Foster (substitute for Councillor Martin Leaves), Michael Leaves, Rennie, Riley and Sparling.

Co-opted Representative: Steve Meakin.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Martin Leaves and Morris.

Also in attendance: Councillor Philippa Davey, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities, Councillor Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Co-operatives and Housing, Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety and Partnerships Manager, Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting, Devon and Cornwall Police, Pete Honeywell, Transformation Programmes Manager, Faye Batchelor-Hambleton, AD for Customer Services, Emma Rose, Strategic Development Manager (Customer Services), Pete Aley, Head of Neighbourhood and Community Services, Di Charlton, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 4 pm and finished at 6.30 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.

11. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the constitution, the following declarations of interest were made in respect of items under consideration at this meeting –

Name	Minute	Reason	Interest
Mr Steve Meakin	15 – Emergency Welfare Scheme Update	Works for the CAB who contribute financially to the scheme	Personal
	18 - Work Programme	Is a landlord of student accommodation	Personal

CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

12. **Co-opted Representative**

On behalf of the panel, the Chair offered a warm welcome to Mr Steve Meakin who was continuing in his role as co-opted representative.

13. **Unauthorised Encampment Update**

Councillor Rennie referred to the Unauthorised Encampment Update provided to the last meeting and voiced concern that, despite a fence having been erected around the Prince Rock field site, a number of caravans and vehicles were once again insitu. Through the Chair, he sought an urgent response from officers as to how this had happened.

Agreed that a response would be sought for Councillor Rennie, with the panel copied in for information.

14. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2015.

15. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - PERFORMANCE INDICATOR UPDATE**

At its meeting on 19 August 2015, the Co-operative Scrutiny Board had referred a number of performance indicators to panels in order that progress could be monitored and, if necessary, challenged. A total of ten indicators had been referred to Your Plymouth, four of which were on the agenda for consideration today, with the remaining six being split between the panel's next two meetings.

Pete Aley, Head of Neighbourhood and Community Services, was in attendance to report on K29.

Outcome	Action – K29	PI
People are treated with dignity and respect	Become a welcoming city that is diverse, inclusive and that combats hate crime and discrimination	Percentage of residents who believe Plymouth is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

The panel was advised that –

- (a) a great deal of work had been undertaken (and was ongoing) with partners across the city to improve on the 69.9% figure recorded in 2008 which was well below the national average of 75.8%;
- (b) by 2014 the city's rating had improved to 76% - above the national average;
- (c) in liaison with the police, any information received was recorded, analysed and, where appropriate, acted upon. This included provision of extra police patrols in any areas identified as having a 'spike' in incidents;
- (d) examples of partnership working and activities aimed at improving communities perceptions of 'getting on well' included –
 - development of 'safe reporting' centres;
 - development of bespoke interventions in response to incidents or crimes related to racism, homophobia, transphobia, disability or belief;

- co-ordination of a range of initiatives during Hate Crime Week (12/10/15);
- provision of small grants to diverse communities in order to promote and celebrate our welcoming and inclusive city;
- Devonport Multiagency Inclusion Day;

In response to questions raised, Members heard further that –

- (e) the information provided in the report had come from the last corporate survey on wellbeing. The results were statistically validated to determine whether or not the returns received were enough to be representative of the city;
- (f) intervention was tailored to address the particular issues within a community – extra Policing along Ebrington Street being one example in response to a spike in incidents. In addition, supporting community events and challenging discriminatory attitudes were other positive measures used in targeting neighbourhoods where there were problems or community cohesion was low;
- (g) information was available by neighbourhood, however, as the number of BME people likely to be included in the sample would be low, and not everyone would state their ethnicity as part of the survey, analysis by ethnicity would not be robust;
- (h) the question ‘do you believe Plymouth is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together’ was one of a package of questions contained within the wellbeing survey which was undertaken in 2014;
- (i) the small grants scheme comprises grants of up to £1,000 of which approximately 10 had been issued to date;
- (j) incidents of race crime accounted for 60% of all hate incidents;
- (k) along with other voluntary and community agencies, those working with refugees and asylum-seekers would be likely to be experiencing financial pressures, creating challenges in meeting demands;
- (l) feedback from victims who had received support following an incident of hate was positive, with high satisfaction rates of over 90%.

Members welcomed the update however voiced concerns over the validity of the data provided, given it was based on a survey of 1,000 people in a city with a population of 250,000 – the margin of error therefore being quite substantial. It was suggested that, in future, a specific questionnaire on hate crime was undertaken in order to more accurately take account of margins for error, demographics, and capture people’s differences of opinion and where their prejudices actually lay.

Outcome	Action – K30	PI
People are treated with dignity and respect People are treated with dignity and respect	Implement the findings of the Fairness Commission	Percentage of residents who believe Plymouth is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

Unfortunately, there was no officer present to provide an update in respect of this performance indicator. The panel voiced its disappointment and asked that the item be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

With regard to Performance Indicators K01 and K02, Pete Honeywell, Transformation Programme Manager, and Faye Batchelor-Hambleton, Assistant Director for Customer Services, were in attendance to update Members.

Outcome	Action – K01	PI
The Council provides and enables brilliant services that strive to exceed customer expectations	Speed up the delivery of Customer and Service Transformation Programme service reviews through developing a Council wide Customer and Service delivery blueprint and Customer Access Strategy	80% of customer contacts with the Council will be managed through the single point of contact, with 80% of enquiries dealt with at first point of contact Provide fully transactional services on the web – through a “Citizen Portal” with a target of the national average and 2% (from 3% to 25%) by volume

The panel received a presentation which informed Members of –

- what was being done to improve services delivered by the City Council;
- how the Customer Strategy improved service to customers;
- the action plan, resources and milestones in place to drive and deliver the Customer and Service Transformation Programme.

In response to questions raised, Members heard further that –

- (m) the driver for change had been the inconsistent provision of customer service across the authority, with many departments operating like independent franchises within department stores;
- (n) most modern authorities were adopting this style of customer-related approach, which was well-used in the private sector and was far more cost-effective;
- (o) an integral link to these changes was the overhaul of the Council’s website which was too complicated and not designed for use on smaller devices. For those customers not able or willing to use digital services they will still be able to call into the First Stop Shop or visit their local library where support will be available;

- (p) there were two payment machines located at the First Stop Shop; one outside for use 24/7 whether the shop was open or closed, and one inside available when the shop was open. It was acknowledged that a sign outside the shop indicating that there was an additional machine inside would be useful;
- (q) the restructure of Customer Services had improved services, reduced a backlog of revenues and benefits claims, and was expected to deliver £1m of savings this year;
- (r) staff had been engaged and supported throughout the process with many of the ideas for change having come from them. Library staff in particular had been keen to take on additional responsibilities within their role and were key players in taking the digital inclusion service forward.

Outcome	Action – K02	PI
The Council provides and enables brilliant services that strive to exceed customer expectations	Intensify performance improvement on top priorities identified by Plymouth residents	(New) Proposed that a measure is included which tracks customer satisfaction (still to be described) will be included in Quarter 3)

The panel was advised that –

- (s) the Plymouth Plan was the culmination of one of the Council’s largest and most inclusive consultation exercises ever undertaken, involving 3,000 comments from over 60 public events and 30 different key strategic partners;
- (t) now that there was an understanding of resident’s priorities, work would continue to ensure that the understanding was maintained via an ongoing cycle of review and consultation;
- (u) all of the milestones relating to the Plan had been achieved and the Plan was shortly to be submitted to Government for statutory approval.

In response to questions raised, Members heard further that –

- (u) consideration could be given to incorporating an element to capture people’s perceptions on diversity and cohesion within the Plymouth Plan as part of its ongoing review;
- (v) the information captured in the performance data only related to calls coming into the Council through the contact centre and not those calls made direct to individual members of staff. The total number of incoming calls had only been captured in the last quarter and, once a clearer picture had been established, it was possible that the targets quoted could be revised.

Concern was expressed that the consultation undertaken on the Plymouth Plan may not have been as far reaching as it could have been in terms of diversity and

cohesion and therefore the priorities may not be reflective or in the best interests of all citizens. Discussion also took place on whether 'customer' was the right terminology to be using, and whether 'citizen' may be more appropriate, however, as no agreement could be reached on which term to use or a suitable alternative identified, the status quo remained with agreement that the matter be kept under review,

With regard to consultation, with the second phase of the Plymouth Plan shortly to be launched, it was suggested that more should be done to promote the consultation and to make it more inclusive. One idea put forward was use of the back of the big screen in the City Centre piazza to advertise it.

The panel recommends that –

- (1) a specific questionnaire on hate crime is undertaken in order to more accurately take account of margins for error, demographics, capture people's differences of opinion and identify where any prejudices lie;
- (2) consideration is given to incorporating an element to capture people's perceptions on diversity and cohesion within the Plymouth Plan as part of its ongoing review;
- (3) consideration is given to improving advertising/promotion of the consultation on Part 2 of the Plymouth Plan to ensure that the public are aware and can engage if they wish;
- (4) a sign is placed outside the First Stop Shop at New George Street to advise customers that there is an additional payment machine inside;
- (5) with regard to performance indicator K30, the item is deferred for consideration at the panel's next meeting on 14 December, 2015.

16. **EMERGENCY WELFARE SCHEME UPDATE**

The panel welcomed Councillor Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Co-operatives and Housing, and Emma Rose, Strategic Development Manager (Customer Services), who were in attendance to provide an update on the latest position regarding the Emergency Welfare Scheme.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) whilst funding had initially been for two years, the implementation of an efficient administration process and robust governance meant that the Council had managed to extend availability of the fund for a third year up to 31 March 2016;
- (b) with regard to the spend profile, further work was being done over the next few weeks to dip sample some of the applications coming through in order to try and establish why demand in some areas was greater than in others. It was, however, thought to be related to the level of vulnerability of the people living in those areas rather than their proximity to the city centre and accessibility to the service;
- (c) there was a limit on the number of claims applicants were allowed to

submit, with a maximum two being allowed in one year. Further work was done with those applicants to establish whether they were getting all of the benefits they were entitled to and to identify if other areas of support could be offered in order to prevent them coming back again, including money management;

- (d) there had been a significant reduction in community care grant payments and this was possibly due to being stricter in terms of the criteria, however, the dip sampling exercise being undertaken would hopefully find the underlying reason;
- (e) demand was increasing considerably. The total number of applications for 2014/15 had been 2,822 whereas in the first six months of 2015/16 staff had processed 1,899 applications;
- (f) it was estimated, based on current projected spend levels, that there would be approximately £275,000 remaining in the fund at the end of the financial year. However, a particularly harsh winter could increase demand further so it was very difficult to say whether there would be anything left in the pot to either carry forward or hand over to the voluntary and community sector should they even wish to come forward and take the fund on;
- (g) 18% of successful crisis payment applications had been for assistance to pay for gas/electric. Money was deposited onto a payment card rather than issued in cash form and officers liaised with landlords to ensure that properties were energy efficient. Where appropriate, referrals were made to Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) who, in partnership with British Gas, were offering free cavity wall and loft insulation.

Members welcomed the update and acknowledged the importance of the scheme. However, concern was expressed that there was nothing in place for it to continue beyond the third year. Councillor Penberthy shared the panel's concerns and asked that consideration be given to how the scheme might be extended beyond March 2016.

The panel noted the report with thanks.

17. **SAFER PLYMOUTH PARTNERSHIP - CRIME UPDATE**

Members welcomed Councillor Philippa Davey, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities, Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety and Partnerships Manager, and Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting, Devon and Cornwall Police, who were in attendance to report on the new approach being adopted by the Safer Plymouth Partnership Board and the latest levels of overall crime in Plymouth.

The panel heard that –

- (a) the Partnership had recently embarked on a period of review and development based on the principles of systems leadership (as recommended by the Fairness Commission). As a result, Safer Plymouth members had agreed to move to a more dynamic and innovative way of working, working effectively together toward agree outcomes that

benefitted Plymouth, irrespective of whether or not they were top priorities for individual organisations;

- (b) since 2006/07 there had been a long-term trend of reducing crime in the City; almost 9,500 less crimes altogether, and between April 2015 and August 2015 there had been 7,658 recorded crimes; representing a 3% reduction on the same period the previous year.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (c) the new partnership approach would be more reactive, focusing on issues through 'deep dive' exercises as necessary, as opposed to the committee-style approach which was more meeting based and focused. An example of a recent multi-agency event was a review of the Quality Inn following the latest arson incident. Safer Plymouth had organized a well-attended public meeting represented by the Police, Planning, Fire, Public Health and Public Protection to hear and respond to the community's views and respond to questions. Following that meeting Safer Plymouth had continued to co-ordinate multi-agency action, including successful prosecution of the owner and was continuing to press the owner to fully resolve the situation;
- (d) spikes in crime could appear for many reasons and sometimes for no reason at all other than random, one-off incidents. For example, in Greenbank last Saturday evening eight windows were taken out in one street. Sector meetings would look at every crime which had taken place to determine whether they were repeats or part of a theme. Whitleigh was one area which had been looked at where there was no apparent reason for the spike, this could be as a result of domestic abuse or other incidents taking place behind closed doors, including youth on youth or youth on adult incidents;
- (e) operation Encompas was still running, however, more publicity was required to promote the fact that it was still in existence as people seemed to think that it was not. Concerns remained with data recording and dissemination as there were still issues in getting information to school by the next morning;
- (f) there was concern that the number of reported crimes was going down because of people's lack of confidence in reporting crimes. This had been the subject of discussion at last week's meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, particularly the failings in the 101 service which had recently been reviewed by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The review had resulted in a 12-point action plan which was due to be reported to the December meeting of the Police and Crime Panel;
- (g) the impending cuts to the police would, in the words of the Police and Crime Commissioner, be disastrous and result in a force and service which would be very different to that which we knew today;
- (h) Safer Plymouth continued to support the re-commissioning process for SARC services in Plymouth and were pleased to report that a further year's contract had been awarded;

- (i) a successful application had been secured to close a legal high retailer in Cornwall Street which resulted in the retailer agreeing to cease selling legal highs immediately and pay costs. A further prosecution in respect of a retailer in Ebrington Street was also being pursued and whilst it had been delayed on a technicality it was anticipated that the case would be in court within the next 21 days;
- (j) only 25% of policing was spent dealing with crime with the remaining 75% spent dealing with 'other' issues. The proposed budget cuts would mean that there would have to be a move toward pushing things that were traditionally directed to the Police toward other agencies and work was already under way to achieve this, such as using the Fire Service to be aware of any safeguarding concerns when they enter people's homes and training taxi drivers to be aware of and flag any concerns regarding CSE.

With regard to the renewal of the SARC contract, Councillor Jordan reported that he had been involved in the recent CSE review and suggested that consideration be given to linking the work of the two together.

The update was noted.

18. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The tracking resolutions schedule was noted.

19. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel considered its work programme for 2015/16.

Councillor Rennie referred to the co-operative review request he had submitted on 'the effects of the expansion of Plymouth University and its students on the surrounding residential areas' and reported that other ongoing work in the area meant that this review was no longer required. He therefore asked that the review be removed from the work programme.

Councillor Kate Taylor suggested that it would be useful to receive an update from the panel's Cabinet Members on their priorities, particularly given that there had been changes to some of the portfolio responsibilities since the last update.

Agreed that the –

(1)	co-operative review 'the effects of the expansion of Plymouth University and its students on the surrounding residential areas' is removed from the 2015/16 work programme;
(2)	Cabinet Members with portfolio responsibilities within the panel's terms of reference are invited to attend the panel's meeting on 14 March 2016.

20. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

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