

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Living Street Scrutiny Review
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 8 December 2015
Cabinet Member: Councillor Mark Coker
CMT Member: Anthony Payne - Director for Place
Author: Adrian Trim, Head of Highways, Parking and Marine Services
Contact details Tel: 01752
Email: Adrian.Trim@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

The Cooperative Scrutiny Board set up a review of the Living Streets at the request of Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel. The review meeting took place 2nd September 2015.

The view followed an earlier scrutiny meeting where officers welcomed the review to make improvements to what was initially introduced by the Highways Partnership as a pilot scheme

This report is to advise Cabinet on each of the recommendations which came from this review.

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

Your Plymouth:

Growing Plymouth:

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

The recommendations as presented in this report do not pose any financial impact to existing budgets and will result in greater value for money as perceived by residents

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

N/A

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

Cabinet is recommended to make the following decisions for each of the Scrutiny recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – Accept

Recommendation 2 – Accept

Recommendation 3 – Accept

Recommendation 4 – Accept (except with modifications to (p))

Reason: n/a

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not responding to the conclusions of the Working Plymouth Co-operative Review Scrutiny Group would mean that the evidence identified through the review would be ignored resulting in a potentially missed opportunity to deliver improvements and/or budget savings.

Published work / information:

Living Streets Scrutiny Review: Minutes of the Living Streets Scrutiny Review meeting – attached.

Background papers:

None

Sign off:

Fin	PC.Pla ceF TC131 4 004.23 0114	Leg	JAR /194 06A /Jan 14	Mon Off	19 40 0/ DV S	HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	NA/SP U/346/ CP/01 14
Originating SMT Member Paul Barnard													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1.0 Introduction

At the Working Plymouth business meeting on 8 July 2015, the panel raised a number of concerns about the current process and performance of the Living Streets Scheme. Members requested improvements be made in the visibility of costs and timings of works and with Members having ownership and control over the residents requests.

A Co-operative Review was requested and agreed.

The Review panel were pleased to hear that the previous scrutiny meeting had already started to have an impact on the process, with the following improvements in place;

- (a) Cultural shift. An acknowledgement that the costing estimates undertaken by Amey's commercial team (quantity surveyors) were resulting in higher than necessary figures due to the inclusion of potential risk items. These estimates will now be undertaken by Amey's operations team, with site visits with supervisors. It should be noted that in accordance with the current Contract, the Council is only charged the actual costs of works undertaken, irrespective of the amount estimated up front.
- (b) all new requests from residents will be discussed with Members first before any response (other than a holding response) is sent;
- (c) Ward Packs have been amended to include more detail;

Although the panel welcomed the measures taken to date, after considerable scrutiny at the review meeting, Members recommended that a package of further improvements and actions be put forward to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 1: Communications with Members:

- (d) Officers to send updated Ward Packs to Members and arrange a Ward meeting as soon as possible to go through the historical requests on the spreadsheet;
- (e) Officers to ensure more proactive contact with Members and arrange for monthly on site meetings;
- (f) Officers to work with Members to explain what is regarded as in scope for Living Streets rather than classified as day to day highways maintenance;

Response: Accept

- (d) The updated ward packs will be sent to ward members on a monthly basis and will include a breakdown of the yearly ward budget. Ward packs are currently being updated during the ward review meetings to remove any historical schemes that may have been added at the inception of the Living Streets initiative but which do not meet the requirements.
- (e) An invitation to arrange a ward review meeting will be sent with the ward pack and weekly reminders will be sent. Officers will also be available on the morning before Full Council meetings and during the interval to give every opportunity for ward members to meet with officers.
- (f) Ward packs are currently being updated during the ward review meetings to ensure only in scope schemes remain.

Recommendation 2 : Cost of Schemes

- (g) Officers to provide some examples of the impact of the costing regime from Commercial team to Operations team, comparing some past and present estimates;
- (h) Officers to ensure that the actual end cost of works is notified to them and added to the Ward Pack spreadsheet;
- (i) Officers to ensure that at site meetings, options are considered to reduce costs and achieve greater value for money e.g. shrubs instead of bollards to prevent pavement and verge parking;

Response: Accept

- (g) Examples of like for like schemes which have been budget estimated by either the commercial team or the operations team are included with this report. It should be noted that the final out turn cost will be the same regardless of the method used to produce the budget estimate.
- (h) A column has been added to the ward pack spreadsheet for the inclusion of the final out turn cost of the scheme. For ease of comparison and reference it is adjacent to the budget estimate column.
- (i) Value engineering will be undertaken on every scheme and the long term maintenance cost implications of options will be highlighted to ward members. In instances where options impact other department's budgets and programmes they will be consulted and included in discussions with ward members.

Recommendation 3: Traffic Regulation Orders

- (j) Officers to challenge the media advertising rates to ensure that they are getting the best deal possible as it is difficult to defend the costs of a scheme to residents;
- (k) Officers to investigate reasons for delays and implement continuous improvement through lessons learned;

Response: Accept

- (j) Advertising costs were scrutinised in some depth approximately 18 months ago. The results and recommendations from that scrutiny will be reviewed and challenged to ensure that the best deal is achieved. The council's procurement department will be included in the exercise to ensure the advertising needs of the whole council are included to improve any economies of scale that may be available.
- (k) Regular weekly meetings are held between PCC and Amey officers to monitor and evaluate the progress of schemes. Best practice learning is identified and incorporated in future working practices.

Recommendation 4: Reporting and Accountability

- (l) all ward Councillors to receive their updated ward pack and arrange to meet to go through the historical requests at the next meeting;
- (m) the Ward pack to be amended to include columns for actual costs, actual approval dates, target completion dates and actual completion dates;
- (n) Amey's Ward Pack to give explanation for approved schemes not being completed by target dates with follow up discussion with PCC Officers around accountability;
- (o) if Amey made any mistakes during the Living Streets process they would be rectified by them at no cost to PCC;
- (p) a penalty charge would be incurred if Amey did not complete approved schemes by the completion date agreed with Ward Councillors and Officers;
- (q) a progress report be reviewed by Working Plymouth at its March 2016 meeting to track progress made against all these recommendations and actions.

Response: Accept. (except with modifications to (p))

- (l) This process has been implemented with a number of ward meetings completed and ward packs updated. Further invitations for ward meetings have been sent to elected members and officers will ensure that every effort is made to accommodate member's timeframes.
- (m) The ward packs have been updated to include the requested columns and data.
- (n) A comments column has been added to provide a record of the detail of any delays to schemes. Ward members will also be advised by email as soon as any potential delays become apparent.
- (o) Where clear and unambiguous requests have been made and agreed by all ward councillors and there are subsequent errors made by the Amey team, the cost of rectifying such errors will be borne by Amey. In the case where agreed works are delayed to allow inclusion within maintenance programmes to reduce costs these delays will be subject to discussion with all ward members and PCC officers and recorded within the ward pack spreadsheet. Ref: recommendation 2 (i)
- (p) Failure to meet the date agreed with ward members due to circumstances within Amey's control i.e. not weather or safety related etc., then the issue will be reviewed by the Head of Highways and a briefing will be sent to the affected members and Portfolio Holder.
- (q) A progress report will be provided for the March 2016 Working Plymouth meeting to track and review progress made against all these recommendations and actions.