

Co-operative Scrutiny Board

Wednesday 18 November 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Bowie, Mrs Bowyer, Jordan, Murphy, Ricketts, Sparling, Storer and Kate Taylor.

Apology for absence: Councillor Sam Davey.

Also in attendance: Peter Honeywell (Transformation Programmes Manager), Ross Jago (Lead Officer), Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Chris Randall (Head of Finance Operations) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.15 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. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillor Mrs Aspinall declared a person interest as she was a governor at Salisbury Road Primary School.

64. **MINUTES**

The Board agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015 are confirmed as a correct record.

65. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

66. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Board considered and agreed the following work programmes –

- (1) Ambitious Plymouth Panel;
- (2) Working Plymouth Panel;
- (3) Your Plymouth Panel;
- (4) Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

The Board also agreed to hold a budget scrutiny training workshop on Tuesday 15 December 2015 at 4pm – 6pm.

67. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

The Board was advised that the Lead Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair had approved under delegated authority that the Working Plymouth Panel hold an additional meeting on Thursday 24 November 2015, in order to consider the key actions arising from the Corporate Plan.

68. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

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

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

The Board considered the key executive decisions contained within the Forward Plan which were due to be discussed by Cabinet between November 2015 and March 2016. Three new items had been included in the plan, as follows -

- Council Tax Base Setting 2016/17
- A 'Fair Price for Care' for Older Persons' Residential and Nursing Homes;
- A 'Fair Price for Care' for Residential and Nursing Homes for Adults under 65 Years of Age.

The retender of the Education Home to School Transport Contracts was already included on the Ambitious Plymouth Panel's work programme for March 2016, although the date of the decision contained in the Forward Plan was July 2015 – November 2015. The Chair of the Ambitious Plymouth Panel undertook to liaise with the lead officer to confirm the date of the decision.

70. **CAPITAL AND REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2015/16 QUARTER 2**

The Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Lowry), the Head of Finance Operations (Chris Randall) and the lead accountant (Hannah West) presented the Capital and Revenue Monitoring Report 2014/15 Quarter 2 report which outlined the finance monitoring position for the Council as at the end of June 2015.

The estimated revenue overspend was £2.265m. The overall forecast net spend equated to £195,274m against a budget of £193.009m which was a variance of 1.2%. This needed to be read within the context of needing to deliver £21m of savings in 2015/16 on the back of balancing the 2014/15 revenue budget where £16m of net revenue reductions were successfully delivered.

The main area of questioning from Members relating to the following –

- (a) did the authority have comparable numbers of staff to other unitary local authorities (it was difficult to assess the level of staffing within other local authorities due to the demographics and service models used for the delivery of services);
- (b) would there be further reductions in staffing numbers (with the continuing reduction in the Revenue Support Grant it was inevitable that there would be further reductions in staffing numbers; services would also need to be delivered in different ways);
- (c) what was the definition of under achievement of savings and an overspend (an overspend related to spending more money than was budgeted for and under achievement related to savings not be made as quickly as anticipated);
- (d) would there be an increase in employing temporary staff (it was anticipated that there would be a small increase in the use of temporary staff whilst services were allowed to bed down);
- (e) the monitoring mechanism in place to ensure that the Early Voluntary Release Scheme need not leave a skills shortage (a robust process was in place which was effectively managed by HR).

The Chair took this opportunity, on behalf of the Board, to thank Chris Randall for his help and support and wished him well for the future.

71. **CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2**

The Transformation Programmes Manager (Peter Honeywell) presented the Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 2015/16 report which provided a summarised evaluation and assessment of the overall progress towards maintaining the Council's ambitions as a brilliant cooperative council using key actions, milestones and performance indicators.

The report included the following –

- performance monitoring;
- focussed reporting for the Board;
- allocated key actions and performance indicators;
- key action summary.

The main area of questioning from Members relating to the following –

- (a) there were no action plans where key actions were rated as 'green' as these were on target to achieve the outcome;
- (b) key actions and performance indicators marked as amber had either missed the target by 15% (or less) or the milestone had been substantially completed.

The Board agreed to recommend that the directional arrows are reinstated within the report for ease of reference.

The Chair thanked Peter Honeywell for attending the meeting.

72. **CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins to consider.

73. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Chair advised the Board that he had signed one urgent decision for the replacement of Salisbury Road Primary School's roof. The roof replacement project needed to be undertaken to avoid incurring further additional costs due to deterioration and dilapidation and to avoid legal action.

The decision taken was as follows –

- to approve an additional project allocation within the Capital Programme totalling £623, 250 to meet the cost of replacing the roof. This would be funded from the unsupported borrowing;
- to authorise the tender for the works to replace the roof;
- to delegated the decision to award the contract to the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Public Health.

The Board noted the decision.

74. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board was asked to consider the recommendations submitted by the Your Plymouth Panel and the Working Plymouth Panel.

The Board agreed –

- (1) the recommendations put forward by the Your Plymouth Panel;
- (2) that in consultation with the Lead Officer, Chair and Vice Chair the Working Plymouth Panel's recommendations relating to the History Centre (meeting held on 14 October 2015) are considered under delegated authority.

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

There were no Co-operative Scrutiny Reviews to consider.

76. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were not items of exempt business.