

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 29th January 2018



Probation Services

This council recognises the continuing issues arising out of the privatisation of offender services, including protecting the public from violence, sexual offences and the unpredictable risks from flash point offences.

We have seen the effects of some poorly managed casework that led to important issues being missed because of the systematic failures of procedures and responsibility management.

Working Links is the private company which won the contract to deliver these services in the South West and Western counties as well as Wales. They are using a critically flawed model according to the Government Inspection report in respect of Gloucester which was produced by HMIP.

According to the report, Working Links have failed to meet targets set within the government contracts and within the first year of the probation contract they faced serious financial problems which resulted in their sale to a German based hedge fund company called Aurelius, that was not part of the original bid.

Examples of their failures in delivering an appropriate service are cause for public concern and are of concern to Plymouth City Council due to an adverse effect on the delivery of some Council services. For example, the unpaid work delivery where there is a provision of free labour on community placements, a notable example being the BBC coverage of a naked offender in a church graveyard.

We call upon this council to support a motion of no confidence in Working Links/Aurelius in relation to the delivery of this contract. Further, we call for an urgent meeting of all local MPs with the contract managers and the relevant trade unions.

There should also be a meeting with the senior management of Working Links to establish minimum and full public protections of the safety margins required, with appropriate staffing and other resources.

As the local authority, we want to hear directly from Aurelius regarding their account and understanding of the service. They will be requested to explain their programme with the intention to deliver effective public services in the Aurelius/Working Links areas in Plymouth.

Therefore this Council agrees to-

1. A motion of no confidence in Working Links / Aurelius to deliver on the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contract.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive to request the Chair of Safer Plymouth invites Aurelius to a meeting of Safer Plymouth to discuss their operations in the Plymouth area
3. Request an urgent meeting with our MP's, contract managers from the National Offender Management Service and trade unions to ensure the safe and effective delivery of public services within the CRC.
4. The information from Safer Plymouth and MP's meetings to be shared with the MP's in the remaining South West and Wales Working Links / Aurelius CRC area.

Proposed – Councillor Philippa Davey (Via Email)

Seconded – Councillor Tudor Evans (Via Email)