



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Tuesday, 17 January 2012

-: Present :-

Councillor Thomas (J) (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Bent, Darling (Vice-Chair), Kingscote, Parrott, Pentney, Pountney and James (In place of Butt)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Hernandez, Thomas (D), Davies, Tyerman, Ellery, Doggett, Baldrey, Cowell, Pritchard, Lewis and Addis)

486 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Butt and Penny Burnside (Co-optee).

487 Urgent Items

The Board were requested to make a slight amendment to the agenda for the meeting. Spatial Planning was moved to become the first item, then Community Engagement and finally Community Safety.

488 Spatial Planning and Waste

The Executive Lead for Strategic Planning, Housing and Energy gave a brief presentation to the Board. The Board were advised that Spatial Planning are confident that they will make the savings required, and meet income targets outlined in the proposed budget by 1st April 2012.

The Board questioned whether there had been a reduction in planning applications in 2011. The Board were advised that there had been a reduction in planning applications in 2011 and that the loss of income was increased via further cost recovery generating an additional £20k.

The Board were advised that Spatial Planning are now charging for pre-application advice, and have been since November 2011 and that in the first 6 weeks of charging for this service they generated £3275. The Board were advised that charges for pre-application advice would be reviewed in April. The Board were advised that Spatial Planning are now charging for the Design Review Panel, and it is forecasted that we will generate £8500 this year.

The Board were advised that negotiations are taking place regarding concessionary fares and that letters have been sent to bus operators. The Board were advised that this is an ongoing process and will take approximately 4 months to complete and that a new rate will be implemented in May 2012. The Board questioned what consultation had taken place; they were advised that consultation has been widespread, including involving groups such as SPOT and that a large number of people have taken part in the interactive surveys. The Board requested that further information be provided to them regarding the knock on effect

on other areas, and in particular Adult Social Care.

The Board were advised that there are vacant posts within Spatial Planning and that as a result of this some projects will be deferred and that work on the Carbon Challenge has been stopped.

The Board questioned why the targets for planning applications were low. The Board were advised that the target for planning applications is 60% and that Spatial Planning are currently achieving 42%, however performance is improving.

The Executive Lead for Strategic Planning was asked why the Revenue Budget 2012/13 figures were marked as not due. The Board were informed that this was due to the uncertainty of the Plymouth Waste Plant but the figures were as up to date as possible.

The Executive Lead for Strategic Planning was asked what happens if waste management at Plymouth goes to judicial review? The Board were informed that this could cost the partnership 27 million pounds over 25 years.

The Board questioned what we could do to enforce the laws against fly tipping in the Bay. The Board were advised that there is a current legal case ongoing with strong supporting evidence. The Board were assured that that we will take action when we can do so.

The Board questioned how much money the Council has set aside for flood risks and whether any savings are to be made out of this budget. The Board were advised that no savings are to be made out of this budget as the Council receives funding from the Environment Agency.

Resolved:

- 1) That with regards to concessionary bus fares consideration be given to the knock on effect to other service areas (specifically the impact on Adult Social Care).

489 Community Safety

The Executive Lead for Safer Communities and Transport gave a brief presentation to the Board. The Board were advised that Community Safety would be able to make the budget savings proposed and that most of the savings identified would be delivered as a result of a restructure within the department. The Board were advised that if staffing levels had to be reduced further then services would have to be cut.

The Board questioned the reduction to the out of hours noise service, and questioned whether this service should be increased not reduced. The Board were advised that there had only been 19 incidents reported in the last year and that some of these have been reports of repeat offenders. The Board were advised that the Council is already collecting evidence regarding issues we have been made aware of, and that the out of hours service will be delivered in a different way in the future.

The Board questioned where members of the public would go to report noise nuisance if the out of hours service is cut. The Board were advised that if the noise was intermittent then people would be able to use the normal office number, if it is a persistent nuisance then it would be classed as anti social behaviour and become a police matter.

The Board questioned how much support was provided to the Community Partnerships. The Board were advised that currently there is only 1FTE supporting Community Partnerships, but that there are currently 5 vacant posts. The Board were advised that the Community Partnership budget has seen no change on last year.

The Board questioned how much funding was currently provided to the CVA and other voluntary sector organisations and requested a breakdown in these costs. The Board were advised that a meeting will shortly be taking place with the CVA to discuss the ongoing agreement with them.

The Board questioned how we deal with landlords in the private sector where properties encounter anti social behaviour issues. The Board were advised that all homes are inspected on a risk basis and that there are new policies in place for these issues.

The Board heard a 3 minute presentation from a member of the public – Gordon Jennings.

Resolved:

- 1) That reconsideration be given to the proposed saving for the out of hours emergency noise service.
- 2) That a review of grants to community, voluntary sector organisations and all other bodies to be undertaken.
- 3) The mayor reconsider the cuts to the out of hours emergency noise service be dropped and that a further sum be provided for a fit for purpose service with improved advertising and a more strategic approach.

490 Community Engagement

The Executive Lead for Involved and Healthy Communities gave a brief presentation to the Board. The Board was advised that as a result of a restructure in Community Engagement there would be a £91k saving, and that new ways in which income would be generated and savings could be made have been put forward as part of the budget proposals i.e. a review of charges within registrars and a budget reduction in Members training.

The Board questioned what the cost of running the Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP) was. They were advised that there is no dedicated support for the TSP, but that support was provided when required by the Governance Support Team or the Business Services Team. The Board were advised that the TSP meetings have been cut by half.

The Board questioned whether the Council Communications Team has taken a reduction as a result of the staffing restructure. The Board was advised that the Communications Team has made a reduction of 2 FTEs.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Mayor considers how much could be saved by disbanding the Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP).