

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Present:

Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Denham, Fullam, Hannaford, Leadbetter, Owen, Pearson and Sutton

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Housing, Assistant Director Public Realm and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

107

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 September and 7 October 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

108

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

109

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF A DISCRETIONARY LICENSING SCHEME FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The report of the Assistant Director Housing was submitted to provide Members with feedback on the outcome of the 10 week consultation exercise undertaken on the proposal to extend the principles of Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Licensing through the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme covering specific types of HMOs throughout Exeter. The report also sought approval for the Designation of an Additional Licensing Scheme.

Members were advised that the purpose of the scheme was to improve standards of those properties deemed sub standard and it would also relieve pressure on the general fund by some £450,000 over the next five years which would help address the severe financial pressures faced by the Council. The new methods of operation were governed by regulations and the scheme would come into force on 23 February 2015.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access stated that this proposal was the start of a process over the coming year to work with Landlords to improve tenanted properties.

Members welcomed this way forward to improve the standards of HMOs in the city.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 11 November 2014 and the comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) a Designation for an Additional Licensing Scheme, covering the whole of the Exeter City Council administrative area, for the types of HMOs specified in Appendix 1, annex B, be made;
- (2) the fee structure detailed in Appendix 2 and the licence conditions detailed in Appendix 3, be agreed;
- (3) the implementation of the Scheme beginning on 23 February 2015, be agreed; and
- (4) the Assistant Director Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access be authorised to periodically review the Scheme, its implementation and resourcing to ensure that the principles of the Scheme are achieved.

110

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL - CONSULTATION ON HIGHWAYS SAVINGS

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted to consider the City Council's response to Devon County Council's consultation on proposed savings of £3.4 million to the 2015/16 Highways and Traffic Management budget. The consultation referred to reductions in services to Devon towns and villages and it was unclear whether they referred in part or in whole to the City of Exeter. Some of the proposed savings would have a disproportionate impact on the City's economy and its citizens given that there were no Parish Councils to take on these essential services.

A Member commented that these proposals had been poorly developed, Exeter was different to the rest of Devon and that he would be taking forward the City Council's concerns with the County Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing stated that the proposals to reduce the vehicles in the second gritting fleet and to cease re-stocking grit bin were contrary to the aims of the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board to reduce trips and falls and improve public health and safety. An Exeter City Devon County Councillor would be raising this matter on behalf of the City at the next County Cabinet meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access stated that at the Devon County Council HATOC meeting on 10 November 2014 it had been confirmed that the city would not be losing any Neighbourhood Highway Staff.

Members raised concerns regarding the reduction in the second gritting and snow clearing fleet, the ceasing of stocking the grit bins and the reduction in weed treatment stating that these proposals would have a negative economic and health and safety impact on the City and its residents.

The Leader invited the two opposition group leaders to accompany the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing and himself when they meet with the relevant Cabinet Members at the County Council to discuss how the two councils can work together to minimise the impact of these proposals.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the City Council's response to the consultation as set out in the body of this report be approved; and
- (2) the Leader of Council seek a meeting with the relevant Cabinet Members at the County Council to begin a dialogue about how the two councils can work together to ensure that the economic and social impacts of these proposals on the City of Exeter are minimised.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Leadbetter requested that his abstention from voting be recorded)

111 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

112 **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER REPORT**

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted to consider the potential to divest the Council's assets into community use and ownership.

The proposals were being brought forward because of the need to introduce new ways of working necessitated by the significant pressures on the Council budget over the next three years. Further details were provided on the progress of discussions with Exeter College on the Exwick Sports Hub at Flowerpot Playing Fields and with community groups using Heavitree Park.

During discussion, Members raised concerns regarding the need to ensure that the Council assets were safeguarded and their community value retained. Each transfer should be assessed on a case by case basis and it would be important to consult with Ward Members on any proposals.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing proposed an additional recommendation that any decisions to transfer Council assets to community ownership or a long lease be taken in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing. He added that, as the Portfolio Holder he would ensure that Ward Members were consulted as a matter of course during any decision making process.

The Assistant Director Public Realm clarified the delegated powers of the Corporate Manager Property with regards to asset transfer.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 11 November 2014 and the comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the principle of asset transfer to community organisations be endorsed;
- (2) the expressions of interest in asset transfer already received from Devon Wildlife Trust, Exeter College and Exeter Saracens be progressed;
- (3) the principle of granting a lease or licence on the tennis facilities at Heavitree Park to Tennis for Free be agreed on terms to be negotiated by the Corporate Manager – Property, with further consideration about the long term transfer of this asset to Park Life once the Community Hub and Café redevelopment are completed;
- (4) the commencement of discussions with the clubs associated with the Council-owned bowling and croquet greens and facilities with a view to supporting them to take on responsibility for these assets over the next two years, be supported;
- (5) any decision to transfer Council assets to community ownership or grant a long lease be taken in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing; and
- (6) the barriers that high costs of insurance can create for community groups be highlighted to Government.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.05 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 16 December 2014.