

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 27 January 2015

Present:

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

Apologies:

Councillor Leadbetter

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Economy, Assistant Director Housing, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Public Realm, Cleansing & Fleet Manager, Economy and Tourism Manager and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

1

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 November and 9 December 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

3

HOLOCAUST DAY

The Committee observed a minutes silence to mark Holocaust Day.

4

HOUSING RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES 2015/16

The joint report of the Assistant Director Finance and Assistant Director Housing was submitted setting out the proposed increases in respect of council dwelling rents, garage rents and service charges with effect from 1 April 2015.

The Assistant Director Housing advised of the proposed increase in rents of Council dwellings and garages of 2.2%. Services charges were limited to covering the cost of providing the services, therefore, whilst some would increase by 2.2% there were exceptions and these were detailed in the report. Government guidelines advised that authorities should endeavour to keep increases from service charges in-line with rent changes which were Consumer Price Index + 1%. Further work had been undertaken on the housing association rents within the city and the results showed an average weekly rent for a two bedroom flat was £100 per week.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 21 January 2015 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) rents of Council dwellings are increased by 2.2% from 1 April 2015;
- (2) garage rents are increased by 2.2% from 1 April 2015;
- (3) service charges are increased by 2.2%, with the exception of charges specified below from 1 April 2015;
 - (a) 2.8% increase in respect of cleaning communal areas in line with anticipated rises in cleaning contract costs;
 - (b) 0% increase in respect of communal electricity at Weirfield House;
 - (c) 0% increase in respect of water at Magdalen Gardens;
 - (d) 3.1% increase in respect of fire alarm testing in line with rises in maintenance and monitoring contract costs; and
 - (e) 5% increase in respect of repair costs in line with Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) rates.
- (4) in principle to charge full market rent to tenants with a household income of at least £60,000; and
- (5) the flexibility to let new-build council housing at 'affordable rents' – up to 80 % of local market rent, where considered appropriate.

5

CLINICAL WASTE COLLECTION

The report of the Cleansing and Fleet Manager was submitted which sought approval for the redesign of the clinical waste collection service. If the recommendations could be implemented fully, this would enable a reduction in costs of approximately £30,000, offer alternative and preferred provision for some clients, and ensure that the Council continued to comply with all relevant legislation.

In response to Members' questions, the Cleansing and Fleet Manager confirmed that while offensive waste would be disposed of via the general rubbish collection there would be a free clinical Sharps waste collection service. As a high proportion of customers receiving a separate clinical waste collection would be experiencing ill-health or have a disability, communication would be carried out sensitively which would include one to one contact via the phone or household visits.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 21 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) a separate clinical waste collection is offered only for hazardous or infectious clinical waste, meaning that offensive waste, such as sanitary protection products (Sanpro waste), will be collected and disposed of via the domestic rubbish collection and disposal at the Energy from Waste plant;
- (2) additional rubbish capacity is provided to households generating Sanpro waste at no charge, where required;
- (3) the Council works with healthcare providers to ensure they make their own arrangements to remove clinical waste that they generate in clients' homes, or that they pay the Council to collect this waste; and

- (4) the Council work with pharmacies and others to explore the potential for a network of sharps-box depositories and exchanges.

6

DOMESTIC WASTE CONTAINERS - CHARGES AND POLICIES

The report of the Cleansing and Fleet Manager was submitted seeking to consolidate into one document a number of existing policies relating to domestic waste collection and supply of waste containers. It also sought approval for a revised policy on charging for domestic waste containers to provide a simpler and harmonised charging structure.

A Member raised his objections to this policy and was of the view that having a flat rate for all households for the purchase of bins in those areas where bins were compulsory was unfair to less well off households. It was in effect a new tax.

In response to Members' queries, the Cleansing and Fleet Manager clarified:-

- the charge for the grey bins covered the cost of the bin together with the supply and delivery;
- there were still some areas of the city where the use of wheelie bins were not suitable and, in these areas residents, would not be expected to use the bins;
- it was expected, that in the case of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's), it would be the landlords responsibility to provide the wheelie bins;
- the Cleansing Department would work with Private Sector Housing regarding whose responsibility the purchase of the bins were in private rented properties; and
- waste operation Supervisors had the capacity to issue enforcement notices under Section 46 of the Environmental Health Act 1990 this action would only be taken as a last resort.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Wellbeing commented that the charges for the grey bins would cover costs including delivery and the green bins were in effect subsidised by council tax. He confirmed that the introduction of the policy would be monitored and reviewed.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 21 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the consolidated waste collection policies in Appendix 4 be approved;
- (2) the proposed list of exemptions from charges for domestic waste containers (Appendix 3) be adopted with effect from 1 February 2015; and
- (3) the Council more robustly follow an escalation process leading to the use of Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to require residents to purchase or provide domestic waste containers to the required specification.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam requested that his voting against this recommendation be recorded)

PARKING PLACES ENFORCEMENT

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted to consider the inclusion of additional parking places within the Civil Enforcement Order, effectively bringing the enforcement of more City-Council owned parking areas in-house. This was as a result of concerns about the robust approach adopted by private parking enforcement of non-Council parking sites in Exeter.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access supported the review of the private arrangements currently in place for Station Road, Exwick and Flowerpot at the end of the lease periods in 2017.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting on 22 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the City of Exeter (Civil Enforcement Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2014 to include the Swans Nest car park for enforcement of classes of vehicles not permitted be amended;
- (2) the permanent inclusion in the 2014 Order of sites at Duryard, Bromhams Farm, Cowick Barton Fields, Bettysmead, Hamlin Lane, King George V and Station Road (Pinhoe) following their successful trial in 2014 be confirmed;
- (3) the Clifton Hill Ski Slope Approach as suitable for enforcement by a private parking enforcement company be confirmed; and
- (4) the private arrangements currently in place for Station Road, Exwick and Flowerpot at the end of the lease periods be reviewed in May and March 2017 respectively.

CITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The report of the Assistant Director Economy was submitted setting out the process and proposals for setting up the City Centre Business Improvement District and recommended that the City Council casts its votes in support of setting it up for the next five years. If the ballot was successful, the BID would commence within six months of the ballot taking place, for a period of five years until 2020.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting on 22 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RECOMMENDED to Council that it approves the City Council casting its votes in favour of setting up the City Centre BID in the forthcoming ballot in February 2015.

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015 UPDATE

The report of the Assistant Director Economy was submitted to update Members on the preparation for Exeter being a 'Host City' for the Rugby World Cup tournament taking place between 18 September and 31 October 2015, including work being undertaken to ensure that there was a legacy from the city's involvement. The Assistant Director Economy also informed Members that the European seven a-side tournament would be held at Sandy Park on 11 and 12 July 2015 and this was an opportunity to test our preparations for the Rugby World Cup tournament.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director commented that the seven a-side tournament would be good for the visitor economy and there was the opportunity to have this tournament return to the city on a more regular basis and Executive should consider providing funding to successfully promote the event.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting on 22 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Assistant Director Economy bring a report to the next Executive on the support required to host the European seven a-side tournament on the 11 and 12 July 2015.

10

ANNUAL REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The report of the Economy and Tourism Manager was submitted updating Members as to the progress made in supporting businesses through Exeter Business Support and the Exeter Pop Up Shop and in renewing the contract for this service, due to commence in April 2015. Following a tendering exercise for the Exeter Business Support Contract for 2015/16, Peninsula Innovations Ltd had been successfully re-appointed.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting on 22 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the City Council to continue to fund business support for embryonic, new and existing businesses to provide opportunities for individuals to secure the means of improving their financial position and promoting job creation, at a cost of £42,000; and
- (2) authority be given to officers within Economy to negotiate a service level agreement for 2015 – 2016, following a contract advertisement, for the continued delivery of services outlined in the report under the banner of Exeter Business Support.

11

2015/16 COUNCIL TAX BASE AND NNDR1

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted looking to set the 2015/16 Council Tax base in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The report also sought approval to delegate to the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) the Council's estimate of Business Rate Income (NNDR1) for the next and following financial years for subsequent circulation to all Members.

Members were advised that there had been a growth in business rates of approximately £1.289 million above the baseline set by the Government and there was still the final payment of last year's deficit of £728,000 to be paid. The amount calculated as the council tax base for the year 2015/16 would be 34,750.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Exeter City Council as its tax base for the year 2015/16 shall be 34,750; and
- (2) responsibility to approve the Council's NNDR1 return by 31 January 2015 be delegated to the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer).

12 **URGENT ITEM - PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR CHANGES OF USE FROM OFFICES TO RESIDENTIAL**

The Leader raised concerns regarding the permitted development rights for the changes from offices to residential which was having damaging consequences on the local office market and in particular Southernhay.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director stated that Exeter City Council had applied for an exemption from the permitted development right for Southernhay as part of the consultation exercise but this had not been accepted. A number of significant proposals had come forward since May 2013 which was leading to a loss of city centre employment and officers had indicated a concern with some of the proposed conversions regarding amenities.

Members raised serious concerns at the loss of valuable office space in the city and that these conversions provided sub standard residential accommodation.

RESOLVED that the Leader, in consultation with Chair of Planning Committee, write to the Minister of State for Housing and Planning at the Department for Communities and Local Government raising the City Councils concerns and asking him to commission a thorough evaluation of the impact these Permitted Development rights were having in terms of the economic, financial and housing consequences and to assess if there was a case for more widespread exemptions.

13 **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 paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

14 **EXETER AND HEART OF DEVON GROWTH BOARD MINUTES 10 NOVEMBER 2014**

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the minutes at its meeting on 22 January 2015 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board meeting held on 10 November 2014 be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.30 pm)

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 24 February 2015.