

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 10 January 2017

Present:

Councillor Edwards (Chair)

Councillors Bialyk, Bull, Denham, Hannaford, Leadbetter, Morse, Owen, Pearson and Sutton

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director City Development, Assistant Director Customer Access, Assistant Director Public Realm, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Service Lead Housing Customers, Housing Community Partnership Officer and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

1

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 8 November and 6 December 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

3

MAJOR GRANTS PANEL MINUTES - 30 NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the Major Grants Panel meeting held on 30 November 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Major Grants Panel meeting held on 30 November 2016 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

4

HOUSING RENTS AND SERVICES CHARGES 2017/18

The joint report of the Assistant Director Finance and Assistant Director Housing was submitted setting out the proposed changes to council dwelling rents, garage rents and service charges with effect from 1 April 2017.

The Assistant Director Finance advised Members that the recommendation was for a 1% rent decrease for council dwellings in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016; garage rent to be increased by 2% with service charges remaining the same with the exception of 3.5% increase in respect of water at Magdalen Gardens and a 5% reduction in respect of door entry systems.

In response to a Member's question regarding the anticipated loss of £7.9 million rental income over the next four years and the impact that this could have on the Housing Revenue Account Loan of £57 million, the Assistant Director Finance

stated that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had undertaken had a done an analysis and the results showed that Council's would have enough funds to manage and maintain their council dwellings.

The Service Lead Housing Customers clarified that the anticipated loss of income due to the reduction in rent over the next 30 business plan years was estimated to be £125 million.

People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 5 January 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) rents of Council dwellings are reduced by 1% from 1 April 2017;
- (2) garage rents are increased by 2% from 1 April 2017; and
- (3) service charges remain at their existing levels, with the exception of charges specified below from 1 April 2017:-
 - (a) 3.5% increase in respect of water at Magdalen Gardens in line with rises in water and sewerage charges; and
 - (b) 5% reduction in respect of door entry systems in line with system maintenance costs.

5

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Housing Community Partnerships Officer presented the report on the new Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement and Communication Strategy which replaced the former Housing Resident Involvement Strategy which had operated from 2012 – 2015. The report also sought endorsement for the Housing Service's 5 Key Pledges (Local Offers) – the Housing Revenue Account's (HRA) service standard commitments to council tenants and leaseholders.

The Housing Community Partnerships Officer advised Members that strategy now better reflected the new working practices within Housing Customer Services and had been written in conjunction with representatives from the Housing Customer Relations Team and tenants and leaseholder representatives on the Performance Scrutiny Partnership. The document was now shorter, user-friendly and would be accessible to Council's tenants and leaseholders.

People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 5 January 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the:-

- (1) new Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement and Communication Strategy 2016 – 2020 be adopted; and
- (2) Housing Service's 5 Key Pledges (Local Offers) be adopted.

POLICY FOR TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HOUSING

The Service Lead Housing Customers presented the report which sought adoption of the new Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy for Housing Services. Members were advised that ASB Policy was last reviewed in September 2012. During the interim period the government had introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act and Housing had completed a major re-structure, and introduced a new way of working. The new policy and the revised procedures reflected these changes.

In response to a question from the Leader, the Service Lead Housing Customers stated that once an incident of ASB had been reported an action plan would be agreed between the person reporting the ASB and the Council. A small summary leaflet would be produced which would be sent to residents outlining the policy.

People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 5 January 2016 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for Housing be adopted with immediate effect.

BUDGET STRATEGY 2018/19

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted to provide Members with a strategic overview of the budgetary position for the 2017/18 financial year and beyond. The report included an indication of the likely level of available resources, the known demand for resources and the proposals to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved.

The Assistant Director Finance made particular reference to:-

- Four Year Settlement – Government had agreed to this Council's offer of a four year settlement;
- New Homes Bonus – Government intended to remove £800 million from New Homes Bonus it awarded to Councils to fund Adult Social Care. The changes would result in the Council being awarded £3.597 million for 2017/18;
- Business Rates Revaluation – Exeter's list had risen by 0.97% against a national increase of 9.6% meaning that, on average, bills in Exeter would reduce; and
- Council Tax – District Councils were allowed to increase Council Tax by 1.99% or £5. Exeter's budget strategy for the next years assumed a council tax increase of £5.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and that the proposals to establish a balanced revenue budget and capital programme be approved.

2017/18 COUNCIL TAX BASE AND NNDR1

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted setting out the 2017/18 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 financial year.

Members were advised that the net Council Tax Base for 2017/18 would be 36,197, being an increase over the 2016/17 figure.

Members discussed the possibility of the County Council increasing Council Tax by up to three per cent above the threshold to spend on Adult Social Care and that although this would relieve pressure on Adult Social Care it would not be adequate enough to help all vulnerable residents.

In response to Members' questions, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that because of the increase in the Council Tax Base and the number of new properties there would be an increase of income from council tax of £308,000.

Members recognised that whilst the increase in the properties within the City would generate additional income, there was also the increase in the costs of provision of council services.

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 2017/18 shall be £36,197; and
- (2) responsibility to approve the Council's NNDR1 return by 31 January 2017 be delegated to the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer).

9

GREATER EXETER STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT ON GOVERNANCE, SCOPE AND TIMETABLE AND AMENDED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Assistant Director City Development presented the report to approve a new Local Development Scheme and to make recommendations on various aspects of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) to be prepared jointly with East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council, and Mid Devon District Council, in partnership with Devon County Council.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Planning Working Group, the main issues raised being:-

- Leaders of the Councils should be actively involved through the Greater Exeter Visioning Board and any successor Greater Exeter Growth and Development Board, with Portfolio Holders for Planning to be on the Members' Steering Group;
- Member engagement to be cross party with regular member briefings; and
- Consultation arrangements.

All the Councils were in the process of considering the report but as East Devon District Council and Mid Devon District Council would need Council approval and these would not be until 22 February 2017, the time table for consultation to start on 17 February would require further discussion.

In response to Members' questions, the Assistant Director City Development explained that there were 14 work streams, some of the work to be undertaken by consultants.

Discussion took place with regards to the need for Members' involvement and input into the plan including the tender process for any consultancy work that was required.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development commented that it was important that Members were kept fully informed of the complex issues of the plan and that there was cross party involvement. There was a forthcoming Members' Briefing to update Members on progress to date on the development plan.

RESOLVED that the following be approved:-

- (1) the subject matter of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan, subject to review as the plan be progressed;
- (2) the timetable for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan;
- (3) the timetable for the Exeter Development Delivery Plan, subject to further review as work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan progresses;
- (4) the Local Development Scheme attached as Appendix A, to have effect from 18 January 2017;
- (5) the preparation of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, without the need for a statutory joint planning committee;
- (6) the establishment of a Member Steering Group with a representative from each of the five Councils, to which the Portfolio Holder for City Development, be appointed, with Portfolio Holder for Economy as the deputy;
- (7) the establishment of a joint Member Reference Forum to which relevant Members from each of the five authorities are invited to attend as required. The forum would meet to consider and make comments on draft plan proposals before they are formally considered by each Council;
- (8) the "Issues" document attached as Appendix B to this report for consultation;
- (9) the draft Greater Exeter Statement of Community Involvement attached as Appendix C for informal consultation;
- (10) that resolution of any inconsistencies arising from the decisions of individual Councils on GESP documents being delegated to Exeter City Council Chief Executive & Growth Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for City Development and the Chief Executives of East Devon, Teignbridge and Mid Devon;
- (11) following agreement with the other District Councils, delegated authority to agree minor modifications (which do not go the heart of the documents' meaning) being granted to the Assistant Director, City Development or City Development Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for City Development; and
- (12) the noting of the staffing proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES - SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report providing an update and details as to the current Council representation on outside bodies. The recommendations had arisen from a Spotlight Review Group that had meet to consider whether representation should be continued on the outside bodies.

RESOLVED that after having consideration for the attached spreadsheet of information (Appendix 1) and the Spotlight Reviews' findings:-

- (1) the feedback contained within this report be recognised;
- (2) the suggested actions contained within this report at Section 8 be agreed; and
- (3) Portfolio Holder for Place to be a full representative with the Leader on Community Safety Partnership.

11 **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIORITIES**

RESOLVED that the list of Portfolio Holders' Responsibilities and Priorities be noted.

12 **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 1,2, 3 and 4 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

13 **SUPPORTING AN EXETER-BASED CREDIT UNION**

The Assistant Director Customer Access presented the report proposing that the City Council support the move of the Plough & Share Credit Union from their current base in Okehampton to Exeter.

Members were advised that this recommendation actions part of a Council Resolution in December 2013 regarding promoting and supporting a local credit union and to support Exeter residents with their money management.

Members discussed the need for the Credit Union to be in an appropriate location within the city centre and that the name should be changed to one that was more meaningful to Exeter which should include the name of the City.

Members supported the report with the amendments to the conditions regarding the name to include the name of the City and the securing of an appropriate operating premises. Members noted that conditions attached to the support from the City Council would be considered by Plough & Share Management Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves:-

- (1) Plough & Share's move to Exeter, by way of a one-off payment, primarily to meet the costs in increased rental charges and Business Rate Relief. The final payment will be dependent upon the rental value of the premises, but approval is sought up to a maximum of £10,000 for rent;
- (2) the conditions to be attached to the support as outlined in section 8.8 of this report with the following amendments;

- Condition 1 - for work in Exeter, the name to be changed to one that was more meaningful to Exeter, including the name of the City;
 - Condition 2 - that the Plough & Share Credit Union make every effort to secure operating premises in an area of high footfall seeking advice from Council officers where necessary. A final decision on the Council's support to be delegated to the System Lead – Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Customer Access, once the Council was informed of the chosen location.
- (3) that following a tendering process, Plough & Share be awarded £36,000 to underwrite loans to the Council's welfare support clients who would not normally be offered a loan as well as cover the fees incurred per loan; and
- (4) the nomination of a representative of the Council to the Plough & Share Management Committee.

14

STAFFING IN PUBLIC REALM

The Assistant Director Public Realm presented the report to approve the implementation of changes to the structure and terms and conditions of posts in Public Realm in compliance with the Management of Organisational Change/Redundancy policy.

Members were advised that the revisions to the Staffing in Public Realm were to address Health and Safety requirements and to recognise the significance of the management of the City Council's tree stock.

Members welcomed the proposals.

RESOLVED that the recommendation as set out in the report be agreed and the Assistant Director Public Realm be authorised to proceed to the consultation stage in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy.

15

REVIEW OF STAFFING HOUSING CUSTOMERS

The Service Lead Housing Customers presented the report advising Members of the business case for increasing the staffing provision within the Housing Customer Team, to ensure the delivery of services in the most effective and efficient way.

Members supported the way forward.

RESOLVED that one new post be added to the Council's establishment to include an additional post of a Housing Customer Technical Assistant (HCTA).

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.37 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 21 February 2017.