

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 June 2019

Present:

Councillor Sills (Chair)

Councillors Buswell, Atkinson, Henson, D, Lyons, Moore, D, Moore, J, Owen and Pattison

Apologies:

Councillor Williams

Also present:

Director (JY), Director (DB), Cleansing & Fleet Manager, MRF Manager and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

In Attendance:

Councillor Bialyk

- Leader

Councillor Harvey

- Portfolio Holder for Environment & City
Management

Councillor Pearson

- Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Physical Activity

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable interest were made.

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EXETER LIVE BETTER MOVE MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder, Leisure & Physical Activity Leisure introduced the report which described the public consultation on the draft strategy and proposed minor changes to the original proposals, following feedback which included comments on accessibility, active and sustainable travel as well as prioritising the Canal and Quay assets for physical activity. The Portfolio Holder recommended that the revised Exeter Live Better and Move More Physical Activity Strategy be adopted.

It was acknowledged that Exeter had a relatively young and affluent population which tended to be more active, however some areas of Exeter were also amongst the most deprived in the country. This Strategy would help to drive forward the ambition for everyone to benefit from an active lifestyle. The feedback from the draft proposals were overwhelmingly positive with 94% respondents to the survey, in support of the overall vision approach. The consultation had attracted 1,650 responses from individuals and organisations and included online and face to face survey reports, written responses and face to face conversations with residents. It was noted that in paragraph 8.2 of the report, that the dates of the public consultation were undertaken between 25 March and 10 May 2019, and the consultation contact email address should be noted as active@exeter.gov.uk

The Strategy offered a once in a generation opportunity, and the involvement of the Sport England Pilot would make a sustained difference to ensure that physical activity was a part of everyone's daily lives. It would also provide the overall

direction for increasing physical activity in Exeter and covered three important areas:-

- Tackling congestion and accessibility
- Promoting active and health lifestyles and
- Building great neighbourhoods

The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity responded to Members' queries:-

- the Strategy was informed by the work of Sport England, but was a Council Strategy to encourage people to become more active.
- the Strategy was part of a high level aspiration, which, although not exhaustive, included the Sport England pilot, consideration of the leisure facilities in the city, the open environment such as parks, pitches, the Canal and Quayside, and also ways to reduce congestion in the city.

The Director Communities, Health Wellbeing Sport and Leisure responded to Members' questions as follows:-

- building any physical activity into daily life to improve health and wellbeing was important and a Member's comment that working on an allotment or in the garden is a good example of this.
- although the Strategy did not explicitly reference disability, ensuring appropriate accessibility and promoting active participation applies to both able bodied and those with disabilities and does not discriminate on that basis. The intention was to focus on the areas of greatest need and address those who had the most challenges, which may include those with disabilities and other protected characteristics.

The Director confirmed that funding from the Sport England Delivery Pilot would expand the number of community builders and introduce new physical activity roles into Wellbeing Exeter. Wellbeing Exeter was currently funded by the City Council, Devon County Council and the Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and Sport England funding would enhance and expand the existing programme.

A Member was able to respond to another Member's enquiry who had sought an update on the progress of the Devon County Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy. It was noted that this matter would be considered by Devon County Council's Place Scrutiny Committee later in September.

Place Scrutiny Committee supported:-

- (1) the revised Exeter Live Better and Move More Physical Activity Strategy in the light of the overwhelming positive feedback from the comprehensive public consultation process and the minor amendments made to the original proposals; and
- (2) requested Executive to support and recommend that Council adopt the revised Exeter Live Better and Move More Physical Activity Strategy.

EXETER LIVE BETTER MOVE MORE BUILT FACILITIES, PLAYING FIELDS, PITCHES, PLAY AREAS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Physical Activity and Portfolio Holder Environment & City Management presented the report, which described the public consultation on the draft report, proposed changes to the original proposals following feedback and recommended the adoption of the revised Strategy, as well as setting out the next steps for delivery of the strategies proposed within the report.

The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity referred to the Built Sports and Leisure Facilities Priority Actions in relation to the following:-

- St Sidwells Point Leisure facilities as a replacement for the Pyramids.
- the commitment for the upgrade and reopening of the swimming pool and spa at the Riverside Leisure Centre in 2020.
- closure of the pitch and putt provision at Northbrook Approach golf course.
- prioritisation of plans for a new and improved swimming pool to replace the Northbrook Pool.
- an outline business case for an enhanced facility mix at the Exeter Arena site to create a community sports village to benefit the whole city.
- a strategic cycling hub in partnership British Cycling, national stakeholders and local clubs
- working with local residents, community groups, Sport England and other stakeholders to co-design a blue print and outline business case for a flagship Community Health and Wellbeing Centre to replace the Wonford Sports and Community Centres.
- continuing to work with the Exeter ski club to identify potential alternative sites for their relocation from the Clifton Hill site.
- continuing to provide engagement opportunities for residents, communities and stakeholders to input into future built facility development plans.

The Portfolio Holder Environment & City Management stated that the Strategy had identified the need for certain kinds of pitches and particularly facilities that could be used year round. He referred to the five Priority Actions set out in the Strategy in relation to the following:-

- working with the local community.
- undertaking an audit of the city's green space.
- mapping and developing the linkage to parks and green space with the cycle and footpaths.
- improve the walking and cycling infrastructure.
- providing support for grass roots community groups wishing to take on more responsibility to manage and maintain parks and green spaces.

The Portfolio Holder Environment & City Management confirmed that the concept of destination play parks would be reconsidered along with the need for greater inclusivity and the reality of ongoing maintenance. A Task Group would be set up to design a strategic framework and high level priorities for the future development of play areas across the city

The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity responded to Members' questions as follows: -

- the usage at Northbrook Approach Golf Course had halved since 2010, with only less than 1% of residents using the facilities during the three month open

season. There were no plans for the City Council to continue to offer golf as there was existing provision in the city.

- 94% of respondents to the survey had agreed with the strategic approach of a number of sustainable centres in strategic locations in the city with suitable public transport links as well as the desire to improve cycling links.
- the Riverside Leisure Centre would reopen in 2020. The fire damage to the roof had resulted in the discovery of a number of structural issues and every effort was being made to the commitment to reopen with a greatly enhanced facility to bolster the swimming offer in the city.
- St Sidwells Point Leisure Centre would open in the spring of 2021.

The Leader responded to a Member's comment on ownership of the Northbrook Approach Golf course and stated there had been a number of requests to use the site, but the Council would consult on any future use of the site with local residents.

The Director Communities, Health Wellbeing Sport and Leisure offered the following responses to Members' comments:-

- the consultation process had used a range of methodologies with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This enabled officers to validate and triangulate data from different sources to identify cross cutting themes. It was noted that there was a significant cost to any consultation.
- the new leisure operator contract would allow for new or existing facilities to be added or removed from the contract.
- the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy presented an exciting opportunity to work with the Football Association and National Football Foundation and open up a national investment stream into local facilities. The Active & Healthy People Programme Lead confirmed that a meeting with the Football Association is taking place on 17 July.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity responded to a Member's enquiry and confirmed that there were no plans to build housing on the site to be vacated by the Northbrook Approach Golf Course. The Council were committed to the preservation of the city's green open spaces including the valley parks, play parks and community parks. The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity referred to the land around Clifton Hill which is not designated as a playing pitch/sports facility in planning policy terms, which is why in principle they could be freed up for development, but he appreciated that did not mean that people in the locality wished to lose those facilities. It was the intention to replace the sports centre facilities elsewhere in the city. He also advised that there was no intention to close the swimming facility at Northbrook Pool, but every intention to build a new pool as soon as they were able to, and no intention to have any gap in provision.

Councillor Buswell proposed the following, seconded by Councillor Atkinson and requested that a full consultation exercise be held with local residents and stakeholders take place on the future use of Northbrook Approach site. The recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

Place Scrutiny Committee supported the following:-

- (1) revised Exeter Live Better and Move More Built Facilities, Playing Fields, Pitches, Play Areas, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy in the light of the feedback from the comprehensive public consultation process and the subsequent changes made to the original proposals;
- (2) requested Executive to support and recommended that Council adopt the revised Exeter Live Better and Move More Built Facilities, Playing Fields, Pitches, Play Areas, Parks and Green Spaces Strategy; and
- (3) a full consultation exercise be held with local residents and stakeholders on the future use of the Northbrook Approach site.

42 **INEXETER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BUSINESS PLAN 2020- 2025**

The BID Manager presented a report which set out the process and proposals for a second term of the InExeter Business Improvement District (BID), and as the Council will be eligible as a rate payer on its own property, recommended that the City Council should cast a yes vote in October 2019 to show support for the setting up the BID for the next five years. A copy of the INExeter BID Business Plan was circulated with the report.

The Portfolio Holder Environment & City Management set out the proposals for a second term as well as a five year Business Plan. During the summer the City Council would work on a contingency plan should the BID vote not be successful in October 2019. He welcomed the focus to support business with the city centre to ensure a strong and vibrant economy and further develop making InExeter as the first point of contact and as a conduit for the operations of the city. He referred to the BID levy rules which had been amended from the next BID term as well as an extension of the BID area to include parts of Sidwell Street, Longbrook Street, New North Road, Fore Street, Bartholomew and West Street, Queen Street, Fairpark Road and Magdalen Road at the request of the businesses located there, which were detailed in an appendix to the report. He referred to the success of the BID which now had 700 businesses, which generated over £500,000 annually to deliver the Business Plan. It was also proposed that the BID levy would change from 1% to 1.25% with businesses being levied from the current rateable value list. He had been nominated to represent the City Council on the BID Board with the support from the Growth and Development Manager as a non-voting attendee.

The BID Manager made a short presentation and thanked the Portfolio Holder and the Council for their commitment to the BID Board over the last five years. She referred to the work of the volunteer Board of Directors and referred to her position as a Council member of the BID Foundation and was pleased that Exeter's BID had the opportunity to connect with other towns and cities to share best practice.

A full description of the projects completed by the current Business Plan was attached as an appendix to the report, but some of the key improvements and projects over the last five years included:-

- the provision of city centre management.
- better connected business community with regular meetings, communication and networking.
- an enhanced and reactive cleansing service,

- the Christmas campaign, lights and events and other seasonal city dressing as well as additional artwork in Queen Street, all to add colour and interest to the city.
- upgrade of the directional fingerposts.
- the launch of the Independent Gift Card with 73 businesses represented and
- the reinstatement of a large retailer group to link to the city's key campaigns.

The Bid Manager had coordinated an engagement process for the BID with all of the businesses through a variety of engagement mediums which had included group and individual meetings, newsletter and surveys to draw out the key priorities for the next five years to ensure a drive to continue the investment in the city centre. The key themes to be delivered over the next five years included:-

- experiences
- welcoming and attractive streets
- supporting and informing

Members were supportive of the work of the BID and hoped that it would be able to continue over the next five years. They made the following comments:-

- the BID levy was not an onerous commitment for the traders as they did receive a tangible extras and support from the BID.
- welcome the proposed staff discounts for public transport and she hoped there would be an opportunity for this to be progressed further, but some disappointment over the contradiction in the aims to meet carbon neutrality with the offer of staff parking discounts and customer parking redemptions. She hoped there would be greater emphasis placed on using public transport.

The Chair welcomed the opportunity to thank the BID Manager and team and he looked forward to an update on the progress of the BID vote.

Place Scrutiny Committee supported the proposals of the City Centre Business Improvement District Board and recommended to Executive and Council the following:-

- (1) that the City Council vote in favour of continuing the InExeter Improvement District (BID) for a second term, covering the period 2020-2025;
- (2) City Council cast its votes in favour of continuing the BID in the forthcoming ballot in October 2019;
- (3) Council approve a budget of £5,000 to undertake the ballot to be funded from General Fund reserves;
- (4) that the Portfolio Holder for Environment & City Management is appointed to sit on the InExeter Board, with the support of the Growth & Commercialisation Manager, to oversee the interests of the City Council and wider city centre through activity undertaken by InExeter;
- (5) the BID boundary is extended to include businesses located on Magdalen Road, at the request of the businesses association and businesses located on Magdalen Road;

- (6) that Exeter City Council charge a true cost of supporting InExeter in collecting the BID levy, calculated at £12,000 + VAT per annum, from £1,500 + VAT per year; and
- (7) the Growth & Commercialisation Manager draws up contingency plans, to be implemented as a result of a no vote in October 2019.

43 **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 items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

44 **OPTIONS FOR INVESTMENT IN EXETER'S KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE**

The Portfolio Holder Environment and City Management presented the report which asked Members to endorse investment in the City Council's Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) with an enhancement of the current kerbside recycling service and introduction of the collection of glass and food waste. The business case outlined a number of options with the aim of improving the financial and environmental outcomes of the MRF, as well as meeting the expectations of residents and future Government requirements in respect of recycling. A number of options were presented with Option 4, identified as offering the best technical solution to address this.

The Service Manager – Recycling, Waste and Fleet referred to the opportunities to increase capacity, maintain the reliability of the service, as well as develop other marketing opportunities to increase revenue. He outlined the detail of what the service would look like to the public with a more immediate capture and sorting of the recycled waste at the kerbside. A further report would be presented to Members at the September meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee and include a detailed cost analysis of the proposal.

He provided the following responses to Members:-

- the lifespan of the various recycling and vehicles was advised.
- food waste would be sent to an anaerobic digestion facility in Devon and the by-products would be a compost-like materials and the gas produced in the digestion process generating electricity which could be stored and fed back national grid network.
- information on recycling would be largely pictorial to ensure the information was accessible to all.
- alternative arrangements would be made to ensure that those residents who required assisted waste collection and, on a trial basis, trolleys to move the boxes.

The Deputy Leader Portfolio Holder Climate & Culture also thanked the MRF Manager and his team for their efforts to effectively recycle the waste, and was reassured that in particular Exeter's plastic recycling was being properly dealt with.

Members of Place Scrutiny Committee supported the proposals and requested the Executive note and support the following:-

- (1) findings of the report (Appendix 1 – Update to the Business Case Investigation of Options for Collection of Household Food Waste);
- (2) support Option 4 (weekly kerbside-sort recycling collection, incorporating glass and food waste collection, with three weekly rubbish collection), and consider a detailed analysis of the cost, health & safety and organisational change implications in the next committee cycle; and
- (3) the investment in appropriate material sorting technology to implement Option 4 and maximise commercial recycling opportunities, and consider a detailed cost analysis in the next committee cycle.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)

Chair